

The New Jersey Institute for Social Justice Announces:



The Honorable Dickinson R. Debevoise Social Justice Legal Advocacy Fellowship





Judge Dickinson Richards Debevoise

For more than 35 years, Dickinson R. Debevoise served with unparalleled distinction as a federal judge in New Jersey until his death at 91. A brilliant jurist, Judge Debevoise dedicated his life to pursuing justice, equality, and opportunity. He passed away peacefully at his home on August 14, 2015. Upon his passing, Jerome B. Simandle, Chief U.S. District Judge for the District of New Jersey, said, "Our court has lost one of its greatest judges ever."

Judge Debevoise was nominated to the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey by President Jimmy Carter in September 1979, and confirmed by the United States Senate the following month. Judge Debevoise assumed senior status in 1994 and served an extraordinary 21 years as a senior judge. During his 35 years on the bench, Judge Debevoise earned a reputation as a consummate jurist, deeply admired and respected for his powerful intellect, fairness, and passionate commitment to justice.

Prior to his appointment to the federal bench, Judge Debevoise was a partner at a leading law firm now known as Riker, Danzig, Scherer, Hyland & Perretti LLP. A graduate of Columbia Law School and Williams College, Judge Debevoise began his legal career as a law clerk for United States District Judge Phillip Forman.

Judge Debevoise began his lifelong public service in the United States Army during World War II, for which he earned a Bronze Star Medal. He also became active in the civil rights movement of the 1960s, representing and recruiting other attorneys to represent civil rights workers in Mississippi during the 1964 Mississippi Freedom Summer. Reflecting on his life's work, Judge Debevoise later explained that one of his proudest professional accomplishments was establishing Newark Legal Services in 1965, an organization (now known as Essex-Newark Legal Services) that provides free legal services and advocates for New Jersey's poor and marginalized residents.

Consistent with his commitment to public service, Judge Debevoise served as the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice's founding board vice-president, trustee, and ultimately trustee emeritus. In that capacity, he helped to create and advance the Institute's mission.

We are profoundly grateful to have had the opportunity to work with Judge Debevoise and honored to commemorate and advance his enduring legacy through this fellowship.

"I think he's probably done more than anyone I can name to improve the legal community and civil rights and representation of the poor in New Jersey."

*-Jerome B. Simandle
Chief Judge,
U.S. District Court for the
District of New Jersey*

HOW YOU CAN HELP

The Institute is seeking support to launch the inaugural Debevoise Fellowship, to honor the legacy of our cherished friend. Please make donations payable to the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice, visit our website to give online at www.njisj.org, or contact our staff at (973) 624-9400 to give a gift of stock.



“My father never lost sight during his long career of the potential for Newark with its rich history and diversity. His work with the civil rights movement during the early 1960s made the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice a natural focus for his energies. The Institute was a great source of pride for my father. He was particularly proud of the work being done to research, represent, and understand the prison population and the challenges of reentry into the workforce and society for those with a criminal record. The Institute’s work fighting structural poverty and racial inequality will continue long after his passing. Our family is delighted that the Honorable Dickinson R. Debevoise Fellowship has been established to help advance the vital work of the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice.”

- Molly Debevoise Rennie



TOPPLING LOAD-BEARING WALLS OF INEQUALITY

This critical moment in our history offers an important reminder that too many in our urban communities live on the margins of society and are denied access to the American dream.

The Institute is committed to knocking down the load-bearing walls of inequality and opening up opportunities in urban communities. Toward that end, we are advancing an ambitious agenda that recognizes the urgency of the challenges we face and works to create healthy communities that will promote a pathway to opportunities.

In his last book, “Where Do We Go From Here?” Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. posits that, given the challenges we face, we have only two options: embrace chaos or embrace community.

The Debevoise Fellowship will enable fellows to join us in advancing an agenda that helps to bend our urban neighborhoods toward community.

THE HONORABLE DICKINSON R. DEBEVOISE FELLOWSHIP

The prestigious Debevoise Fellowship offers attorneys an unparalleled opportunity to help advance the Institute’s cutting-edge work in expanding access to social justice and economic opportunity and advocating for criminal justice reform in urban communities across New Jersey.

Fellows will help develop public policy, legislation, and litigation, and create public education campaigns to advance social justice. In addition, Debevoise Fellows will participate in community meetings and conferences, cultivating relationships with community leaders, lawyers, government officials, academics, and organizing/advocacy experts.

The Debevoise Fellowship provides a lawyer with the opportunity to spend one year as a staff attorney with the Institute. The ideal candidate for the fellowship has two to three years of legal experience, along with a deep and abiding commitment to Judge Debevoise’s passion: fighting for justice and equality.

The program will hire one Debevoise Fellow each year.

Challenging Barriers. Empowering People.



“The Institute is a leading social justice organization that empowers residents of urban communities to realize and achieve their radical potential. Our dynamic and independent advocacy is aimed at toppling load bearing walls of structural inequality in order to create just, vibrant, and healthy urban communities here in New Jersey, and across the country.”

-Ryan P. Haygood, President and CEO

The New Jersey Institute for Social Justice (“Institute”), established in 1999 by the Alan V. and Amy Lowenstein Foundation and located in Newark, NJ, is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization dedicated to addressing the causes of, and the relationship between, urban poverty and injustice. The Institute advances its mission by identifying the most challenging issues facing New Jersey’s most impoverished residents and communities through applied research and writing, convening experts, and community input. Our holistic approach includes legal advocacy and direct service programming in the areas of work and workforce development, equal justice, and building urban assets. The Institute seeks viable solutions to addressing urban poverty and injustice in New Jersey.

Challenging Barriers. Empowering People.

60 Park Place, Suite 511
Newark, NJ 07102
973.624.9400 ph
973.624.0704 fax
justice@njisj.org
www.njisj.org

