



NEWS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

**Hon. Joseph A. Zayas
Chief Administrative Judge**

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Chief Administrative Judge Announces New Legal Fellowships Honoring Two Judicial Trailblazers

*Fern A. Fisher NYC Housing Court Legal Fellowship and Ruben A. Martino NYC
Family Court Legal Fellowship to Support Next Generation of Public Interest Lawyers*

NEW YORK—Chief Administrative Judge Joseph A. Zayas today proudly announced the creation of two prestigious legal fellowships honoring the legacies of two transformative jurists: The Fern A. Fisher New York City Housing Court Legal Fellowship; and the Ruben A. Martino New York City Family Court Legal Fellowship. The former recognizes the pioneering work of Judge Fisher, who began her career as a legal services attorney in New York City Housing Court and went on to become the Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for the New York City Courts and Director of the court system’s Access to Justice Program; while the latter fellowship honors the late Judge Martino, a beloved jurist who sat in both New York City’s Housing Court and Family Court and was known for his compassion, fairness, and deep understanding of the communities he served.

“These legal fellowships—honoring the enduring legacies of these two exemplary jurists and tireless champions of justice—support early-career attorneys committed to public service and equal justice in two of the New York State Unified Court System’s most active and vital courts,” said Chief Administrative Judge Zayas. “They were thoughtfully created with a vision for the future.”

The respective legal fellowships place selected attorneys in New York City Civil Court’s Housing Part or New York City Family Court, where they work closely with judges, court staff, and legal service providers to promote access to justice for vulnerable populations. These roles offer recent law school graduates with a demonstrated interest in public service a unique opportunity to gain hands-on experience and exposure to trial practice, judicial decision-making, and procedural fairness in the state’s busiest courts. As part of their fellowship, participants attend professional development forums hosted by the court system, engaging in discussion with judges and legal professionals on judicial processes, public policy, and career pathways in the legal system.

“These legal fellowships are integral to the court system’s broader mission to make justice more accessible and responsive. They not only preserve but build upon the legacies of their respective namesakes whose distinguished judicial careers were defined by fairness, dignity, service, and compassion,” said First Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Norman St. George.

Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Edwina G. Richardson, who oversees the Office for Justice Initiatives, added, “The creation of these fellowships reflects our commitment to nurturing the next generation of legal advocates and innovators. These Legal Fellows will be trained in the values of human-centered justice exemplified by Judges Fisher and Martino.”

New York City Housing Court Legal Fellows support the resolution of landlord-tenant disputes, code enforcement cases, and other housing-related matters. They rotate among judges to observe various adjudication styles and case types, also contributing to meaningful legal research and writing in advancing access to justice.

“Fern Fisher’s judicial tenure was marked by systemic reform that enabled greater access to Housing Court, with this fellowship empowering new lawyers to further her goal of housing justice for all, regardless of need,” said New York City Civil Court Administrative Judge Shahabuddeen A. Ally.

Legal Fellows assigned to New York City Family Court support the resolution of custody, visitation, guardianship, family offense, support, paternity, parentage, child abuse, child neglect, juvenile delinquency, and other Family Court-related matters, observing various adjudication styles and case types, while contributing to meaningful legal research and writing in addressing New York’s justice gap.

“Judge Martino, who also served as a Supervising Judge of Bronx County Family Court, believed in the power of the law to protect and heal families. This legal fellowship will help ensure that his spirit of service lives on in New York City Family Court,” said New York City Family Court Administrative Judge Anne-Marie Jolly.

These fellowships are offered annually, and postings will be available at the court system’s website in Spring 2026 at <https://ww2.nycourts.gov/careers/opportunities.shtml>.

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