



Celebrating the Class of 2017!



Senior Honors:

At the end of each year, the Mgrublian Center for Human Rights honors students who have excelled in the field of human rights academia and student involvement in the Center. This year, we are happy to honor two members of the Class of 2017 for their human rights works.

Victor Lopez '17, Best Thesis in Human Rights: *LGBT Civil Rights vs. Religious Freedom: Determining the Constitutionality of Statutes that Prohibit Discrimination on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Grounds in Areas of Public Accommodations*. Following his graduation from CMC, Victor will attend Law School at Columbia University in the fall.



Anoush Baghdassarian '17 has been actively involved with the MCHR since her freshman year serving as a volunteer, program assistant, and eventually a research fellow. As a dual major in Psychology and Spanish, with a sequence in Genocide, Human Rights, and Holocaust studies, Anoush has always proved and demonstrated her commitment to human rights through action and academia. Anoush has continued to impress and inspire those around her with her intelligence, passion, and commitment to human rights.

Anoush will spend the summer of 2017 in Armenia interviewing Syrian-Armenian refugees through a Davis Projects for Peace scholarship and plans to attend law school in the future. Anoush also received the "Best Overall Student" honor from the Center. We will miss Anoush next year and we thank her for her dedication to the MCHR.

Saying Goodbye to the Class of 2017

As another year passes, we must say goodbye to students who have dedicated their time and support to the MCHR. Since the beginning of her time at CMC, **Nicole Southard '17** has been one of the pillars of the Mgrublian Center. Nicole has dedicated so much to the Center, helping to grow and shape it and she truly exemplifies academic excellence and a selfless dedication to human rights and social justice. We thank her for all of her hard work and long hours put into the MCHR and we will miss her next year. We wish her luck in her future endeavors!



Since transferring to CMC in the beginning of her sophomore year, Nicole began working for the MCHR, starting the Amnesty International chapter and acting as its President, organizing career panels, screenings, and other events, and serving as a mentor to underclassmen seeking to pursue human rights. During her time at CMC, she has interned for both Amnesty International USA as well as the Fundacion Danilo Perez in Panama. Nicole embodies the true meaning of a leader both in and out of the classroom. This May, Nicole graduated with a dual degree in International Relations and Spanish and in the fall will pursue a masters degree in International Policy Analysis at Stanford University. We can't wait to see Nicole's future successes!

To everyone at the Mgrublian Center for Human Rights:

There are certain people whom you come across in College who will absolutely transform the trajectory of your life. Sadly, it is only too often that one realizes the impact such people have had after it is too late to tell them how much they mean to you. For me, there are so many people at CMC that have had this impact, and at the Mgrublian Center I feel as though every individual has found this special place in my heart. So many of you, including the Board of Directors, Professor Lower, Kirsti Zitar, Professor Appel, Larissa Peltola, and all of the many students, faculty, and staff which support the Mgrublian Center for Human Rights, have helped me grow and learn in ways I could have never anticipated. As a result of the people I have met at the Center, and the many opportunities which each of you have given me through your support and wisdom over these past few years, I am the person you see today. It is thanks to each of you that I have become who I am, become a leader in the fight for human rights, and have chosen to work towards the goal of social justice as a career path.

Soon I will head to the Bay Area to begin my studies at Stanford University where I will be studying for a masters degree in international policy (with a concentration on democracy, development, and the rule of law). Yet, without CMC, and especially without the overwhelming generosity which each individual at the Mgrublian Center has shown me these past few years, I could not be in the place I am today, nor imagining my promising future ahead as I see it now. For everything all of you have done, and in all the ways you have helped me become who I am (both directly and indirectly), I am deeply appreciative and hope that you know just how much changed my life in the best way possible.

- Nicole Southard '17

Saying Goodbye: Anoush Baghdassarian '17

To the Mgrublian Center for Human Rights:

As a freshman, every single opportunity seems exciting and it seems as if you have the world at your feet. You can do anything...be anything....achieve anything. However, those are just feelings and unless you have certain people who can help those dreams come true, they may not. One of the biggest keys to materializing these aspirations, I found, is to have someone who believes in you and who thinks you can achieve more than you yourself think you can; someone who isn't hindered by the limitations and obstacles of self-doubt and hesitation that naturally come when trying new things...for me, these were the kinds of people who made up the Mgrublian Center for Human Rights and they were undoubtedly the greatest influences on me and my future trajectory in a human rights career and I am and forever will be incredibly grateful.

I remember how it started -- I went to the research institute fair in Collins Dining Hall during my freshman year and met Kirsti Zitar, one of the many people I met that day. I had never had such a defined interest in "human rights," but more a very strong inclination to recognize genocide, particularly the Armenian Genocide which was something close to my heart. From the first meeting we ever had back in September 2013 with Professor Haley, to various meetings in the middle with Professor Lower, and to the very last goodbye lunch with Professor Appel, Kirsti has always been a constant source of support, inspiration, and belief and she has always encouraged me to do more than I would have initially thought. I am so grateful to have had such a strong foundation throughout my time here at CMC and I can't imagine how things would have been different without her because she was such an instrumental part of my time at CMC.

Throughout these 4 years working with the Center I learned more than just from my experiences through the Mgrublian Center--I learned from the people there and the way they treated me. The way they reached out to *me* with me in mind for opportunities, the way they introduced me to new forms of human rights I had not known before, the way they cared so much about every student in their community and highlighted their achievements in so many different ways...I am so very grateful for that and there are so many people who impacted me in positive ways and who I won't ever forget. From professors and board members, to every alum who has come back to explain the impact the Mgrublian Center has had on them has inspired me and made me feel even more connected to the center and I don't know how to express the full extent of my gratitude in words because the feelings connected to my experiences there run so deep that they can only be expressed through emotion.

If there's one thing I've learned at CMC, it's that life doesn't always turn out the way you plan it--there are unexpected twists and turns along the way that transform your planned path into a very beautiful conglomeration of each experience you've had and person you've met that has brought you to that point. I'm not sure where I would be without the guidance, support, and love I received at the Center but I am sure that it would not be nearly as fulfilling as it is to know that I am doing work that is meaningful, and that is supported by professionals in the field who validate my efforts and help me feel confident that I am on the right path to making a difference in this world. I feel that I have been touched by giants...giants in this field of human rights who have done so much and contributed the greatest amount that if I could even follow a fraction of the way in their footsteps, I would be on the right path.

Thank you to the Mgrublian Center for every single moment of my 4-year career that you have guided me. Every person who has touched my life in some way through the Mgrublian Center, please know how much it means to me and how much you mean to me. You have changed my life for the better and I am so eager to continue along this path of human rights. Without this center, I think I can honestly say that I would not be going into human rights law, I would not be so curious to learn more about these human rights issues because I perhaps wouldn't have known about them, but most importantly, I wouldn't feel *capable* to accomplish all the huge goals and aspirations I have now because I wouldn't have had the support network necessary to propel me forward. I can't wait to see how this center grows in the years to come and all the incredible students that come out of the center with a vision and the tools to change the world.

-Anoush Baghdassarian '17

Student Achievements

Every year, the Mgrublian Center for Human Rights offers a variety of opportunities for students to pursue sponsored human rights research and internships. Every summer, a cohort of CMC students are selected to receive funding to work at a human rights related summer internship; and during each academic year, students are provided the chance to pursue independent research on a human rights topic of their choosing. Here are this year's summer interns and research fellows:

2017 Summer Interns:

Mohamad Batal '18

International Rescue Committee - Washington, D.C.

Samuel Fraser '19

Salzburg Global Seminar – Salzburg, Austria

Jenna Grunwald, '19

Child Family Health International –
Cordoba, Argentina & La Paz, Bolivia

Riley Hoffman, '19

Child Family Health International – Accra, Ghana

Medina Latic '20

Transitional Justice, Accountability, and Remembrance - Bosnia & Herzegovina

Malea Martin '19

POLIN Museum – Warsaw, Poland

Brianna Munoz '18

U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum - Washington, D.C.

Paloma Palmer '19

New Media Advocacy Project - Brooklyn, NY

Mariah Rigg '18

Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking (CAST) -
Los Angeles, CA

Roxane Sazegar '19

Amnesty International - Washington, D.C.

Rebecca Shane '19

Human Rights Watch - New York, NY

Elaine Wang '18

Child Family Health International – Guayaquil &
Quito, Ecuador

Read their blogs!

<https://www.cmc.edu/human-rights/human-rights-student-interns>

Student Fellows:



From left to right: Professor Hilary Appel, Fiona Bare '17, Roxane Sazegar '19, Michele Pashby '19, Anoush Baghdassarian '17, Will Cullen '19, Sam Neufeld '18, Kirsti Zitar. (Not pictured, Patrick Elliott '19)

Anoush Baghdassarian '17:

Recovering the Archives of Hovhannes Aharonian, a Survivor of the Armenian Genocide.

Fiona Bare '17:

Humanitarian Aid in Conflict Zones.

Will Cullen '19:

Environmental Injustice in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Patrick Elliott '19:

Education: A Tool for Some, A Barrier for Others.

Sam Neufeld '18:

Trauma and Mental Health Challenges of Undocumented Central American Youth.

Michele Pashby '19:

United States Cover-up of Japanese Unit 731.

Roxane Sazegar '19:

An Oral History: Human Rights in Iran under the Shah.

Task Force Updates

Amnesty International:

Since its first year, the Amnesty group has been working with the CMC administration to pass a Conflict-Free Campus Resolution. The resolution, sponsored by the Enough Project, encourages the CMC community to be responsible when purchasing electronics from companies that out-source minerals from the Democratic Republic of the Congo which is currently in the middle of one of the deadliest conflicts in history. The Amnesty group is thrilled to announce that this resolution will show electronics companies that CMC will be a responsible institution that values and supports human rights around the world.

No Lost Generation:

On April 17th, No Lost Generation hosted an athenaeum panel on the Refugee Crisis. The event aimed to shed light on the various facets of the refugee crisis through the insight and expertise of humanitarian aid workers, academics, community leaders, and refugees themselves. The CMC athenaeum welcomed two Syrian refugees from the Claremont community, the Vice President of the Islamic Center of Claremont, a researcher at UCLA's Center for Middle East Development, and a Refugee AmeriCorps Manager from Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Services.

IDEA

IDEA worked with students to write notes in Burmese to a partner school in Myanmar which IDEA has worked closely with since the beginning of the school year. The partnership with the Burmese school will continue through next year and IDEA will offer a variety of other support activities to the school. This past academic year, IDEA also led a letter writing campaign to state senators about funding for girls education.

Congratulations to all graduates, students, and faculty for yet another wonderful academic year. We look forward to a wonderful 2017-2018 year and can't wait to hear about the ways students have used their summers to promote human rights around the world!

Let us all remember that:

"We are way more powerful when we turn to each other and not on each other, when we celebrate our diversity... and together tear down the mighty walls of injustice."

Cynthia McKinney, American politician and activist



MGRUBLIAN CENTER FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS
CLAREMONT MCKENNA COLLEGE

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