2019 Irell & Manella Diversity Scholars

Irell & Manella LLP selected its scholars for the 2019 Irell & Manella Diversity Scholarship. The firm created the scholarship to promote diversity in the legal profession and to attract future leaders who are dedicated to creating an environment of inclusion.

About the Diversity Scholarship

The Irell & Manella Diversity Scholarship awards up to two $15,000 scholarships to highly qualified second-year law students who accept offers to join the Irell & Manella Summer Program. Half of the award is paid in January of the recipients’ second year of law school and the other half is paid upon commencement of the third year of law school. To apply, applicants must: 1) successfully complete one year of law school; 2) have stellar academic achievement; 3) demonstrate leadership ability; 4) showcase a dedication to diversity; and 5) possess a commitment to contributing to the legal profession.

About Our Scholars

Monica Daegele is a second-year law school student at the University of Michigan Law School and an incoming 2019 summer associate in the Century City office. She graduated from Notre Dame with a B.S. in Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering and a Minor in Gender Studies.

Monica attended an all-girl high school. That experience empowered her to give specific care and attention to issues that predominantly affect women and children. While at Notre Dame, she sought out an organization that could help her channel her passion. She found that organization in the Sexual Offense Services of the Family Justice Center, the rape crisis center for St. Joseph’s County which provides free legal and medical services to survivors.

Monica’s experience as an advocate for survivors of rape and domestic violence has shaped her into the tenacious woman she is today and has forever altered the manner in which she approaches others and the experiences they carry with them. By giving a voice to the voiceless, she has a new awareness for her position, which gives her the power to speak. Being a female sexual offenses advocate has enabled Monica to bring an understanding of the strength needed for advocacy, and the power of such advocacy, to all new endeavors.

Dion Diederich is a second-year law school student at the University of California, Irvine School of Law and an incoming 2019 summer associate in the Newport Beach office. She graduated from Oberlin College with a B.A. in History and Minors in Economics and English.

Dion was raised in a multi-cultural household with her Korean mother and her German-Bolivian father. Neither of her parents taught her how to speak their native languages. Because she did not understand the words being exchanged, she learned to interpret conversations by carefully observing emotion and tone and watching facial expressions and posture.

Dion attended Oberlin College to study vocal performance, but a series of health complications eliminated music as a viable career option. Feeling lost, she endeavored to find herself by embracing her heritage through academic study and community involvement. This did not provide the sense of familiarity she had hoped for, so she took a position in student government. She found the techniques she used to understand her family’s foreign language conversations applied in this new setting and helped her to diagnose problems, communicate solutions and appreciate the diverse and different priorities of various groups. She found the self-realization she had been seeking not through familiarity and social acceptance, but by applying the traits cultivated by her upbringing in service of others. Dion hopes to build a legal career that is founded on the training in the language of the law through which she can solve problems by drawing on and further fostering the communication skills and cultural awareness with which she was raised.