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## **Rebecca Schueller Awarded 2017 Michael Maggio Immigrants' Rights Summer Fellowship**

**WASHINGTON, DC** – The American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), joined by its project partners the Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law (CHRCL), and the National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild (NIP/NLG), are delighted to announce Rebecca Schueller has been named the recipient of the Michael Maggio Immigrants' Rights Summer Fellowship for 2017. Ms. Schueller, a second-year law student at the Cleveland Marshall College of Law will create a pilot program to provide legal assistance to detainees held at the Northeast Ohio Correctional Center (NEOCC) in Youngstown, OH, under the auspices of the International Institute of Akron (IIA).

One of the reasons Ms. Schueller's application was chosen was the concrete and measurable ways that having access to legal counsel can ensure that detained immigrants have a meaningful chance to request asylum, increasing access to justice for those otherwise disadvantaged by their circumstances. Currently the NEOCC houses approximately 300 Mexican, Central American, and Chinese arriving aliens, with 250 more arriving soon, many of whom have asylum claims but lack the legal expertise to prepare for credible fear interviews.

"The work that Rebecca Schueller will do at Northeast Ohio Correctional Center reflects Michael Maggio's commitment to social justice," said Madhu Sharma, IIA Director of Immigrant Services. She continued, "Those seeking asylum are among the most vulnerable and have to describe difficult, abusive, or violent life experiences to an asylum officer to claim 'credible fear.' Helping them prepare for those credible fear interviews will make a difference from day one."

AILA Executive Director Benjamin Johnson noted, "This fellowship was created to honor Michael Maggio's outsized impact on the practice of immigration law; he loved bringing young people into the field and offering them the chance to be change agents by using their knowledge to benefit those who desperately need that help. Having an advocate on your side makes an immense difference in the asylum process, and the results of Rebecca's work will be quickly apparent."

The three sponsoring organizations jointly created the fellowship in 2009 to commemorate the life and legal contributions of Michael Maggio. This fellowship honors him as an extraordinary immigration attorney, individual, and life-long advocate for justice, equality, and peace. Throughout his career, Mr. Maggio received countless professional awards and was honored for his extraordinary legal representation, astute strategizing, unwavering commitment to the highest ethical standards, and his deep passion for justice and upholding the rule of law. He was an active member of AILA, the National Lawyers Guild, and served on the Board of Directors of the National Immigration Project. He was also an active supporter of the Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law. He died in February 2008 after a courageous battle with cancer.

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*The American Immigration Lawyers Association is the national association of immigration lawyers established to promote justice, advocate for fair and reasonable immigration law and policy, advance the quality of immigration and nationality law and practice, and enhance the professional development of its members.*