

Introducing the 2020 Vern Countryman Award Winner!

At the 2020 Virtual Consumer Rights Litigation Conference (CRLC) in November, NCLC was proud to present its annual Vern Countryman Award to an attorney whose special contributions to the practice of consumer law have strengthened and affirmed the rights of low-income Americans: **Jane Greengold Stevens**.



Jane is co-director of the special litigation unit at New York Legal Assistance Group in New York City. She has worked in legal aid for most of her 50-year legal career, starting at Legal Assistance Foundation of Chicago in 1969. In her many years of practice, she has been a passionate champion for the rights of low-income consumers. She has an impressive track record of successful litigation, including cases against predatory for-profit schools who defrauded their students. Jane has brought cases against the state and federal government on behalf of student loan borrowers, including the successful 1994 case *Gibbons v. Riley*, which benefitted three million student loan borrowers. She has also attacked unlawful debt collection practices and protected exempt income from seizure in consumers' bank accounts.

NCLC extends its congratulations to Jane for her receipt of this award, and our gratitude for all she has done to fight for vulnerable consumers throughout her distinguished career! ■

Meet our 2020 Rising Star Award Winners!

Established in 2015, the Rising Star Award is annually presented to attorneys who have made major contributions to the field of consumer law and settled significant consumer law cases. NCLC is proud to present the 2020 Award to three attorneys who represent some of the best young talent in our field, and we look forward to their future success in advocating for low-income and vulnerable consumers across the nation.



Rebecca Borné

Rebecca serves as senior policy counsel at the Center for Responsible Lending (CRL), which she joined 12 years ago. CRL is a research and policy organization dedicated to protecting homeownership and family wealth by working to eliminate abusive financial practices. Rebecca advocates for federal protections against predatory practices that exploit the financially vulnerable, particularly in the areas of payday loans, high-cost installment loans, and depository overdraft practices. Rebecca engages with federal regulators and legislative offices, authoring comment letters to inform policy proposals, providing input on draft legislation, and occasionally testifying before Congress.

She has authored a number of research and policy reports while also serving on the board of Capital for Change, a Connecticut-based CDFI.



Nicholas H. Mattison

Nick is a partner at Feferman, Warren & Mattison in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Nick's practice includes individual cases and class actions against fraudulent car dealers, predatory lenders, abusive debt collectors, and other businesses that rip off consumers. He has litigated many consumer class actions from start to finish, including one where he became the first and only attorney to enforce New Mexico's payday loan law. The case went all the way to trial, where his clients were awarded millions. Nick gets impressive results for individual clients as well. In 2016, he won a \$10 million verdict against an abusive debt collector.

Before becoming a lawyer, Nick was an elementary school teacher on the Navajo Nation.



David H. Seligman

David has been the Executive Director of Towards Justice since 2018. He has litigated in support of workers and consumers in several class and collective actions to attack systemic injustices that undermine the power of workers and consumers in the marketplace. One such action includes the first antitrust case to challenge "no hire" provisions in franchise agreements among fast-food franchisees, as well as several cases supporting workers during COVID-19.

David also performs support and policy advocacy for state and local agencies in their efforts to protect workers as well as regularly writing and speaking before state legislators on forced arbitration. ■

Campaign for the Future Update

NCLC's *Campaign for the Future* is a long-term initiative launched last November to strengthen NCLC's economic justice advocacy, and expand training and support for the consumer law community, through long-term structural investments in the following areas:

- 1. Next Generation Campaign:** Develop the next generation of consumer lawyers and build a bigger and stronger consumer law community.
- 2. Legal Aid Partnership Project:** Strengthen NCLC's support of civil legal aid attorneys who serve low-income consumers.
- 3. State Advocacy Initiative:** Expand NCLC's impact at the state level, where many of the most important consumer law battles are being fought.