

# CHINYERE EZIE

Civil Rights Lawyer | Activist | Consultant

## **EDUCATION**

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**Columbia University School of Law**, New York, NY

J.D., May 2010

Honors: Alexander Hamilton Scholar (Full Merit Scholarship); Harlan Fiske Stone Scholar; Jane Marks Murphy Prize Recipient; Parker School of Foreign & Comparative Law Recognition of Achievement in International Law

Activities: Editor-in-Chief, *Columbia Journal of Gender and Law*; President, Columbia Outlaws; Conference Chair, African Law Students Association; Domestic Violence Prevention Courtroom Advocates Project

**Yale University**, New Haven, CT

B.A., *cum laude*, Sociology & International Studies, May 2006

Honors: Frank Memorial Prize for Outstanding Senior Thesis in Sociology

## **EXPERIENCE**

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**Center for Constitutional Rights**, New York, NY

*Senior Staff Attorney*, October 2018 – Present | *Legal Intern*, Spring 2009

Litigates racial justice, gender justice, and LGBTQ rights cases. Regularly presents on legal issues at conferences, law schools, and in the news media.

**U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission**, New York, NY

*Trial Attorney*, October 2016 – October 2018

Litigated employment discrimination cases on behalf of diverse plaintiffs, with a focus on LGBTQ rights. Managed all aspects of complex litigation in federal court, including brief-writing, oral argument, and trial advocacy. Lead Attorney on *EEOC v. United Health Programs of America et al.*, a religious discrimination case that resulted in a \$5.1 million dollar jury verdict in the Eastern District of New York and a historic injunction.

**Southern Poverty Law Center, LGBT Rights Project**, Montgomery, AL

*Staff Attorney*, September 2014 – October 2016

Litigated groundbreaking civil rights cases in state and federal court with a focus on constitutional rights and LGBTQ matters. Expert in legal issues related to sex discrimination in the areas of healthcare, employment, housing, and education. Lead Attorney for Ashley Diamond, a transgender woman whose lawsuit concerning Georgia's refusal to provide her gender dysphoria-related care or protection from sexual assault led the U.S. Department of Justice to affirm the constitutional rights of transgender prisoners to medical treatment, and Georgia to agree to a monetary settlement, early release, and significant policy changes. Served as counsel for persons facing an array of civil rights violations, including transgender employees subjected to employment discrimination, individuals denied same gender marriage recognition, and an intersex child subjected to medically unnecessary sex-assignment surgery. Also engaged in policy advocacy and worked in coalition with members of impacted communities.

**Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP**, New York, NY

*Associate*, Fall 2011 – August 2014 | *Summer Associate*, Summer 2009

Engaged in complex litigation in state and federal court—drafting complaints, briefs, and motions, conducting depositions, and managing fact and expert discovery. Maintained an active *pro bono* docket, including a *Bivens* litigation on behalf of a man from the Dominican Republic maliciously prosecuted, Bronx residents affected by policies of stop and frisk, and a transgender woman subjected to gender discrimination.

**Hon. Victoria A. Roberts, Eastern District of Michigan**, Detroit, MI

*Research Assistant*, Summer 2011

Conducted legal research, prepared bench memoranda, drafted opinions, and attended hearings.

**Hon. Eric L. Clay, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, Detroit, MI**

*Law Clerk, Fall 2010 – Summer 2011*

Conducted legal research, drafted bench memoranda and opinions, and attended oral argument.

**American Civil Liberties Union–National Office, New York, NY**

*Law Clerk, Summer 2009*

Conducted legal research and drafted memos in support of the LGBT HIV/AIDS Project.

**Columbia Human Rights Clinic, New York, NY**

*Clinical Student & Teaching Assistant, Fall 2008 – Spring 2010*

Engaged in curriculum development, participated in proceedings before the Inter-American Commission, and completed diverse initiatives concerning human rights in the Americas and in Sub-Saharan Africa.

**Open Society Institute Justice Initiative, New York, NY**

*Legal Intern, Summer 2008*

Researched treaties and case law on international war crimes, analyzed materials in French and English, and drafted research memos.

**Kenya Human Rights Commission, Nairobi, Kenya**

*Legal Researcher, Summer 2004; Summer – Fall 2005*

Conducted research and drafted reports on pre-trial detention and due process violations in Kenya and human rights abuses in export processing zones.

## **HONORS & AWARDS**

**Go Magazine, 100 Women We Love, 2020 Honoree**

**NYC Bar Association, Arthur S. Leonard Award, 2020 Honoree**

**National LGBT Bar Association, Top 40 Lawyers Under 40, 2016 Honoree**

**Myra Bradwell Award for Distinguished Columbia Law School Alumnus, 2016 Recipient**

**J. William Fulbright Scholar, Fall 2006 – Fall 2007**

Completed a year-long quantitative and qualitative study on export-led development in Mauritius, surveying 1000 export processing zone workers, and convening focus groups in six languages with the help of a research team.

**Cohen Public Service Fellow, Summer 2005**

Conducted field research on urbanization and industrialization in Kenya; helped found an apparel workers' collective that engages in HIV/AIDS education and outreach in Nairobi slum communities.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

*Not Your Mule?: Disrupting the Political Powerlessness of Black Women Voters*, 92 COLORADO L. REV. \_\_\_ (Forthcoming).

*Deconstructing the Body: Transgender and Intersex Identities and Sex Discrimination—The Need for Strict Scrutiny*, 20 COLUM. J. GENDER & L. 141 (2011).

*Discourses on Self, Work and Globalization among Kenyan Apparel Workers*, 6 YALE J. SOC. 6 (2006).

## **BOARD & PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

Treasurer & Founding Board Member, National Trans Bar Association Board

Member, Transgender Law Center

## **ADMISSIONS**

Admitted to Practice in New York State, the U.S. District Courts for the Southern, Eastern, and Western Districts of New York, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth, Ninth, and Eleventh Circuits.