



## **THE NEW YORK BAR FOUNDATION 2026**

### **Elder Law and Special Needs Section T. David Stapleton Memorial Scholarship**

The New York Bar Foundation is pleased to announce the **2026 Elder Law and Special Needs Section T. David Stapleton Memorial Scholarship** which has been established by The Foundation through a gift from the Elder Law and Special Needs Section of The New York State Bar Association. The Section is pleased to offer this Scholarship in honor of former Section Chair, T. David Stapleton. The scholarship, with a value of \$3,500, will be awarded to a second year (2L) or third year (3L) law student who is enrolled in a law school in the State of New York who has demonstrated an interest in the Elder Law and Special Needs practice area, and intends to practice in the field in Upstate New York following law school.

T. David Stapleton practiced in Auburn, NY and served as NYSBA Elder Law & Special Needs Section Chair from 2011-2012, after having followed the officer track and being involved in leadership within the Section leading up to such role. David not only led as a tremendous lawyer, but he also advocated for “upstate” involvement, sought to expand our knowledge of literature by peppering almost every writing and conversation with a poignant quote, encouraged a healthy lifestyle through diet and exercise and demonstrated the importance of family, friends, and camaraderie among lawyers.

David’s signature issue during his tenure as Chair was the rescinding of expanded Medicaid estate recovery. Some will recall his having mentioned that while he understood the underlying concept of the state in seeking to expand recovery options, he truly believed the powers-that-be did not appreciate the devastating impact it would have on the “little folks” who would lose even modest inheritances if the expansion was carried out.

While not diminutive in stature, David always diminished his breadth of knowledge of the law, often calling himself a “small, upstate lawyer.” It is our honor to offer this scholarship in his name to another potential “small, upstate lawyer” in David’s memory.

#### **The T. David Stapleton Memorial Scholarship Goals**

The ultimate goal of the scholarship is to create a network and cultivate relationships among lawyers whose practice focuses on elder law and special needs planning and law students planning to practice in these areas to encourage the practice of elder law and special needs planning among lawyers in the upstate regions of New York.

### **The T. David Stapleton Memorial Scholarship**

The scholarship, valued at \$3,500, will be awarded to one (1) student enrolled on a full-time or part-time basis during the 2025-2026 academic year in a law school in the State of New York who has a demonstrated interest in the Elder Law and Special Needs practice areas and intends to practice in the field in Upstate New York following law school.

1. The Elder Law and Special Needs Section Scholar will be a guest member of the NYSBA Elder Law and Special Needs Section during 2026.
2. The Elder Law and Special Needs Section Scholar and a guest will be invited to attend The Elder Law and Special Needs Section's Annual Meeting in January 2026, to receive the award.
3. The scholarship recipient will be announced in December 2025.
4. The Elder Law and Special Needs Section Scholar will be selected by a committee comprised of representatives from The New York Bar Foundation and the NYSBA Elder Law and Special Needs Section. The selection committee will be comprised of no less than three members of the Elder Law and Special Needs Section.

### **Eligibility**

1. The scholarship is open to all second-year (2L) and third-year (3L) students who are enrolled in a law school in the State of New York who have a demonstrated interest in the Elder Law and Special Needs practice area and intend to practice in the field in Upstate New York following law school.
2. The student must have attained a 2.5 or equivalent GPA in law school.
3. Preference will be given to a student who can demonstrate financial need.

### **Payment of Scholarship**

The scholarship will be applied to the student's 2025-2026 academic year tuition. A check, made payable to the law school and the student, will be sent to the school no later than the end of February 2026.

### **Scholarship Application Requirements**

The applicant **must** submit the following as a single PDF file:

1. A completed application (application form below)
2. Cover letter of interest
3. Unofficial law school transcript
4. Current Résumé
5. A two to three-page double-spaced essay by the student demonstrating why he or she would like to practice in the areas of Elder Law or Special Needs Planning in Upstate New York

### **Deadline**

Completed application must be submitted by email on or before **Monday, November 10, 2025.**

### **Judging**

Criteria for judging applications will be:

1. Content and quality of application materials.
2. Demonstrated interest in Elder Law Elder Law and Special Needs Planning.
3. Academic record.
4. Recommendation from advisor or another relevant individual.
5. Quality of written expression.
6. Maturity, integrity, and professionalism.
7. Any other relevant factors.

### **Submission**

Only single PDF files will be accepted.

Completed application must be submitted by email on or before **Monday, November 10, 2025.**

Email submissions should be sent to [\*\*Ldorr@tnybf.org\*\*](mailto:Ldorr@tnybf.org)

Please include ‘**Stapleton Scholarship**’ on the subject line.

## *About T. David Stapleton*

Community leader and attorney, T. David Stapleton was a founding member of the firm Karpinski & Stapleton, P.C. and a native of Auburn, NY. He practiced law for more than 50 years--first with his father-in-law, John J. Karpinski, and then with his brother-in-law, John A. Karpinski. Mr. Stapleton served Cayuga County as an Assistant District Attorney, and then focused on Estates and Trusts for many years. His legal acumen earned him admission to argue before the Supreme Court of the United States of America. His true legal passion emerged in the second half of his career when he focused on Elder Law and became the first attorney in the Cayuga County area to do so. Mr. Stapleton's dedication and determination to care for the elderly and those with special needs quickly earned him peer



recognition. Mr. Stapleton was asked to serve on the Executive Committee of the Elder Law Section of the New York State Bar Association. He served in numerous capacities, including as Chair ("Antique" Chair, as he jokingly referred to himself) of the 3,000-member Section where he continued to advocate for the elderly and those with special needs. He worked tirelessly lobbying lawmakers and changing New York State law while sharing best practices in the field. For his efforts and expertise in Elder Law, he received numerous awards, including Best Lawyer and Super Lawyer. Mr. Stapleton also volunteered his time to ensure that the elderly in Cayuga County knew best how to protect themselves and their life's savings.

Mr. Stapleton served on numerous boards and committees in the local community including the Seward House Museum Foundation, United Way, Cayuga Community College Foundation, Auburn Community Hospital, Cayuga County Chamber of Commerce, Auburn Bicentennial Committee, Auburn Field the Dream Campaign for Falcon Park, and Cayuga County/City of Auburn Cooperative Governance (Chair).

Mr. Stapleton graduated from Catholic University Law School and Georgetown University. He was a man of great intellect and integrity who was blessed with an abundance of humor and selflessness.

*About the* **ELDER LAW and SPECIAL NEEDS SECTION**  
**of the NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION**

The Elder Law and Special Needs Section provides services and opportunities for involvement on issues relating to Elder Law and Special Needs for members of the New York State Bar Association. Among its activities, the Section presents educational programs and publishes materials on practice, procedure and developments to enhance the competence and skill of lawyers who practice in this field and improve their ability to deliver the most efficient and highest quality of services to their clients; prepare studies, analyses and recommendations to seek improvement in the law and procedure relating to elder law and the special needs population; and undertake projects to increase the understanding of senior citizens, their families and the general public concerning legal issues affecting the elderly and disabled.

*About* **THE NEW YORK BAR FOUNDATION**

Founded in 1950, The New York Bar Foundation is dedicated to aiding educational, direct legal services, and charitable projects aimed at meeting the law-related needs of the public and the profession. The Foundation solicits charitable contributions and provides funding for the following purposes:

- Increasing public understanding of the law
- Improving the justice system and the law
- Facilitating the delivery of civil legal services
- Enhancing professional competence and ethics

For more information about The New York Bar Foundation, go to

[www.tnybf.org](http://www.tnybf.org)



**2026**

**The T. David Stapleton Memorial Scholarship**

*Provided by The New York Bar Foundation through a gift from the Elder Law and Special Needs  
Section of the New York State Bar Association*

**APPLICATION FORM**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Permanent Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

School Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(if different)

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Law School attending: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Day student      \_\_\_\_ Evening student

Year of Law School Study as of September 1, 2025: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of anticipated graduation from law school: \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe in detail your efforts and/or experiences which demonstrate an interest in the legal rights of the elderly, or disabled, or the practice of elder law. (You may submit a separate page describing your efforts.)

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Do you plan to practice in one of the Upstate New York regions?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you receiving financial aid? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please describe:

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Have you previously received any scholarships? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please describe:

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Are you working to pay for your law school expenses? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please explain:

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What are your career goals?

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### **Prior Education**

| <u>College Name</u> | <u>Address</u> | <u>Major</u> | <u>Dates<br/>Attended</u> | <u>Degree</u> |
|---------------------|----------------|--------------|---------------------------|---------------|
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**Attach the following materials to this application as a single PDF file:**

1. A cover letter which indicates your interest in the practice of elder law and special needs planning and the receipt of The T. David Stapleton Memorial Scholarship
2. A law school transcript. (Transcripts need not be official; finalists may be asked to provide official transcripts)
3. Current Resume
4. A letter of recommendation from your advisor, or from an individual who can substantiate your efforts and/or experiences that demonstrate interest in the legal rights of the elderly and disabled
5. One two to three-page double-spaced essay demonstrating why you would like to practice in elder law and special needs planning. (Must be two to three double-spaced typewritten pages)

**Application Deadline:**

Completed application must be submitted by email on or before **Monday, November 10, 2025.**  
**Only single PDF files will be accepted.**

Email submissions should be sent to [Ldorr@tnybf.org](mailto:Ldorr@tnybf.org)

Please include 'Stapleton Scholarship' on the subject line.

**Certification**

**I hereby certify that all of the statements contained, and information provided in this application, and in the attachments hereto, are truthful, to the best of my knowledge, and that I meet the eligibility requirements for the 2026 T. David Stapleton Memorial Scholarship.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Where did you hear of TNYBF Scholarship Opportunity? \_\_\_\_\_