



Burton Blatt Institute
Syracuse University

Advancing the civic, economic, and
social participation of people with
disabilities

Syracuse University

College of Law

September 19, 2019

Our Legacy

- BBI is named for Burton Blatt (1927-1985), former Dean of SU School of Education, a pioneer in humanizing services for people with disabilities.
- Burton Blatt brought public attention to thousands of individuals living in institutional purgatory.
- BBI brings Blatt's values and vision to the next generation of teachers, researchers for an inclusive society.



*"We can change the world.
The first step is to change
ourselves!"
-Burton Blatt*

American Bar Association Project

In May of 2017 the ABA launched a first-of-its kind nationwide study at BBI to:

- identify the biases encountered by LGBT+ and/or disabled lawyers in the legal profession; and,
- help develop and implement strategies to ameliorate such biases



Peter Blanck, University Professor & BBI Chairman
Christine Sonsire, Attorney
Ynesse Abdul-Malak, BBI Senior Research Fellow

Peter Blanck Meets Ecuadorian President, Lenin Moreno

Proclaiming First UD
(Universal Design)
Building in Ecuador for
People with Disabilities



Appellate Brief Legal Training Project (ABLT)



- A collaboration between a local law firm and BBI
- BBI provides legal writing training for future attorneys in support of persons with disabilities who have been denied Disability Insurance Benefits (SSDI) and/or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) by the Social Security Administration (SSA).
- Since 2013, SU law students and recent law graduates analyze unfavorable SSA decisions and medical evidence to draft legal briefs on behalf of persons denied these benefits for appeal to the SSA Appeals Council.
- Over 96 law students and graduates have written over 13,427 briefs as of June 30, 2019 for Appeals Council review.

Supported Decision Making



Jonathan Martinis & Jenny Hatch

- In 2013, Jonathan Martinis represented Jenny Hatch in the nationally acclaimed "Justice for Jenny" case, helping Ms. Hatch secure her right to live where and how she wants, to make her own decisions, and direct her own life. It was the first trial to hold that a person with disabilities has a right to engage in "Supported-Decision Making."
- The "Justice for Jenny" decision is hailed nationally and internationally for the principle that "an individual's right to choose how to live and the government's progress in providing the help needed to integrate even those with the most profound needs into the community" is a right guaranteed under law.

Office of Interdisciplinary Programs and Outreach (OIPO)

Supporting Global Disability Cultural and Arts Diplomacy

OIPO works across the breadth of Syracuse University to promote engagement with disability across multiple disciplines. The program's director, Professor Stephen Kuusisto, notes that "disability is central to all human affairs and can be found in multiple disciplines. We aim to bring faculty, students, and staff together to explore new horizons of disability teaching and research at Syracuse University."

Programs under development include:

- a summer boot camp on disability and entrepreneurship; and
- new grants on artificial intelligence and disability as cultural diplomacy.

OIPO is also hosting several upcoming events, including programming on disability and graphic medical narratives and disability, literature, and culture.



Stephen Kuusisto, University Professor and Director of OIPO, Presenting in Kazakhstan

Southeast ADA Center

A project of Burton Blatt Institute-Syracuse University

- The Southeast ADA Center answers questions, provides training and materials and information about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- The Southeast ADA Center, headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, serves an eight-state geographic region (AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, & TN) and has network of affiliates in each state that includes Centers for Independent Living (CIL), employers and businesses, nonprofit organizations, and state and local government agencies.



Southeast ADA Team



Remembering George H.W. Bush as a champion for those with disabilities

On July 26, 1990, Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act, a law which has helped millions of people.



ABOUT THE BURTON BLATT INSTITUTE (BBI) AT SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

The Burton Blatt Institute (“BBI”) at Syracuse University reaches around the globe in its efforts to advance the civic, economic, and social participation of people with disabilities. Through program development, research, and public policy guidance, BBI advances the full inclusion of people with disabilities. BBI builds on the legacy of Burton Blatt, a pioneering disability rights scholar. BBI has offices in Syracuse, NY; Washington, DC; Atlanta, GA; New York City, NY; and Lexington, KY.

For more information,
visit bbi.syr.edu

