

The Anita F. Alpern Endowed Scholarship

Scholarship recipients for the Anita F. Alpern Scholarship Fund are selected based upon merit, financial need, and commitment to public service. Applicants for the scholarship submit an essay on public service; show an interest in pursuing a public service career; and have a demonstrated record of commitment to public service. Students enrolled in the Masters in Public Administration (MPA) and Key Executive Leadership MPA programs are eligible to apply.

About Anita F. Alpern

Anita F. Alpern joined the faculty of the School of Public Affairs in the late 1970s and served for twenty years as a Distinguished Adjunct in Residence. She taught courses on public administration and administrative ethics in the graduate MPA and Key Executive programs and supervised the internship programs for students in the Department of Public Administration and Policy. One often found Professor Alpern in her office counseling a student beginning his or her career. Her supervision of interns, devotion to student interests and knowledge of the federal civil service system was largely responsible for the success of the school in placing an exceptional number of graduates in the Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) program.

Prior to joining the faculty at American University, Professor Alpern had a distinguished career in the federal civil service. A native of New York, she completed an undergraduate degree in political science at the University of Wisconsin. She left her graduate studies in public administration at Columbia University to start work in Washington, D.C., shortly after the U.S. entered the Second World War. Beginning her government career as a labor market economist in the Bureau of Economic Security, she eventually moved to the Munitions Board and the Department of Defense, where she worked as a program and systems research analyst. In 1962 she took a position as Chief of Analytical Services at the Internal Revenue Service, rising to the position of Assistant Commissioner for Planning and Research. She was one of the first eight women appointed to the rank of GS-18 and upon her retirement was the highest-ranking woman in the U.S. civil service.

Professor Alpern won the 1975 Federal Women's Award and was the first woman to win the President's Award from the Washington chapter of the American Society for Public Administration. In 1978 she was elected to the National Academy of Public Administration. Her accessibility and the example of her own career inspired many public administration students. Professor Alpern was respected by her students and colleagues and was instrumental in motivating young men and women to become part of the Federal workforce.