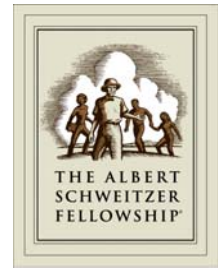


**CONTACT:**

Patrice Taddonio  
Communications Specialist  
The Albert Schweitzer Fellowship  
617-667-5628  
ptaddonio@bidmc.harvard.edu



*From Abuse Victim to Legal Advocate:*

## **SCHWEITZER FELLOW WYNONA WARD HONORED AS A *CNN HERO***

### **Galvanized by her own experiences with domestic abuse, trucker-turned-lawyer now delivers mobile legal support to abused women and children in rural Vermont**

As a child growing up in rural Vermont, Wynona Ward and her mother suffered horrific abuse at the hands of Ward’s father. Now, Ward travels the length of the state several times each year in her trademark pickup truck, delivering mobile legal support for isolated, abused women and children in whose shoes she once stood.

In honor of her efforts to end domestic violence by empowering its victims, Ward has been named as the first CNN Hero of 2010. She’s the subject of a powerful video airing on *Larry King Live* and an in-depth profile on CNN.com—and she’s in the running to appear on 2010’s “CNN Heroes: An All-Star Tribute” in November. Hosted by CNN’s Anderson Cooper, CNN Heroes was launched in 2007 to spotlight everyday citizens changing the world.

“Wynona has an incredible personal story,” says Rebecca Torrey, who nominated Ward as a CNN Hero. “After surviving childhood abuse, she ran a trucking company for fifteen years. But when abuse resurfaced in her family, she made a radical life change. She knew it was her calling to work towards ending domestic violence.”

At 44, Wynona became the first member of her family to graduate from college. She then applied and was accepted to Vermont Law School, and, in 1996, was selected as a Schweitzer Fellow – a graduate student who commits to addressing health disparities via an intensive direct service project lasting a full year, on top of his or her professional school responsibilities. By conducting their Schweitzer service project during such a demanding time, Fellows emerge with the tools to make service an enduring part of their “regular lives.”

“While completing her Schweitzer project, Wynona’s firsthand knowledge that most battered women simply did not have the material means to escape from abusive situations was reinforced,” says Torrey, who directs the New Hampshire-Vermont Schweitzer Fellows Program. So Ward launched Have Justice-Will Travel (HJWT)—a unique and innovative mobile program that provides free legal services for domestic violence victims in rural Vermont. In the past decade, HJWT has delivered legal and social support to more than 10,000 such women and children.

“[We] work with these women so they can become strong and independent and self-reliant and be able to support themselves and their children,” Ward says in CNN’s profile. “[HJWT] would have ... said to my mother, ‘Yes, you are being abused, and it is not OK. You do not have to put up with this. You do not have to be a submissive wife. And you do not have to put up with having someone beat you. We can help you. We can help you to get out.’”

Ward is the first CNN Hero of 2010. Her profile will be available throughout the year at [www.CNN.com/Heroes](http://www.CNN.com/Heroes). CNN will air “CNN Hero of the Week” profiles throughout the year; these profiles are available at [www.CNN.com/Heroes](http://www.CNN.com/Heroes). An esteemed Blue Ribbon Panel will select the Top Ten CNN HEROES, and the public will then select the “CNN Hero of the Year” via voting at CNN.com/Heroes; the voting period dates will be announced later this year. In 2009, the third year of the CNN HEROES initiative, it received over 9,000 submissions from 100 countries – a new record. This represents more than twice the number of nominations received in 2008.

Torrey believes that if anyone deserves the title of CNN Hero, it’s Ward. “The purpose of The Albert Schweitzer Fellowship [ASF] is to develop leaders who dedicate their lives to serving society’s most vulnerable members—ultimately reducing health disparities,” Torrey says. “Through HJWT, Wynona is doing exactly that.”

#### **About The Albert Schweitzer Fellowship [ASF]**

ASF is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that works to address health disparities by developing “leaders in service.” Each year, ASF competitively selects approximately 250 graduate students from health-related professional schools as Schweitzer Fellows. Applicants must design and implement a yearlong, 200-hour direct service project that addresses an unmet health need in their community.

Fellows exit their initial year with a hard-earned blueprint for how to consistently integrate service into their lives. They become Schweitzer Fellows for Life, committed to sticking with that blueprint throughout their careers. There are now over 2,000 Fellows for Life in 46 of 50 states shaping health policy, serving their communities directly, and supporting each other in sustaining a commitment to service.

The U.S. Schweitzer Fellows Program was founded in 1991. It now has 11 locations across the country. Schweitzer Fellows served over 25,000 clients in need in the last program year. ASF is funded entirely through charitable donations and grants. For more information or to join ASF’s mailing list, please visit [www.schweitzerfellowship.org](http://www.schweitzerfellowship.org) and <http://schweitzerfellowship.wordpress.com>

#### **About Have Justice-Will Travel, Inc. [HJWT]**

HJWT is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that brings legal and social services into the rural communities of Vermont. The mission of HJWT is to end the generational cycle of abuse in rural families by bridging the legal, cultural, geographical, psychological, and economic gaps that exist for victims of domestic abuse. HJWT provides legal and supportive services—including in-home consultations, transportation to and from court hearings, and free legal representation—for battered, low-income women and their children.

The HJWT model considers the entire spectrum of needs for clients. An important aspect of the model is a supervised visitation program which offers a safe environment for parent/child contact. Women in Transition, a life skills and mentoring group, teaches women how to turn the coping skills they used to survive the abuse into strengths to improve their lives. The outcome of this mobile multi-service model has been that few HJWT clients return to abusive relationships.

For more information, please visit [www.havejusticewilltravel.org](http://www.havejusticewilltravel.org).