

SUMMER LAW INSTITUTE

Newsletter

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Empowering a Resilient Sisterhood of Young Women at Brooklyn Law School SLI

For the summer of 2024, 25 bright young women made their way to Brooklyn Law School's vibrant campus every day to study the criminal justice system. With a passion to learn threaded into the classroom, these young women built a beautiful sisterhood where they grew as scholars every day. Through this intensive five-week program, students were challenged as they studied complex material about the criminal justice system and understood the ins and outs of criminal trial procedure. These young women were challenged everyday to rise up beyond their capabilities. They grew their skills through comprehensive lessons, thought-provoking essay writing, weekly exams, and high expectations that transcended their limits.

Legal Outreach also exposed these students to professionalism through daily guest speakers and interactive field trips. Finally, our dazzling students took to the courtroom and participated in a mock trial where they put their newly-found skills to the test.

***Our Sponsors:* Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler LLP and Kirkland & Ellis LLP**

Meet the Staff



Nicole Strzepak
Legal Teaching Fellow

Ms. Nicole Strzepak is a rising 2L at Brooklyn Law School and is from New Jersey. Ms. Nicole graduated from Lehigh University in 2023 with her bachelor's in International Relations and Spanish and a minor in Real Estate. Ms. Nicole is a proud dog mom who loves to travel and garden.



Jasmine Crain
Legal Teaching Fellow

Ms. Jasmine Crain is a rising 2L at Cornell Law School and is from El Paso, Texas. Ms. Jasmine graduated from the University of Texas at El Paso in 2023 with a bachelor's degree in Philosophy and Creative Writing and a minor in Legal Reasoning. When she is not in school, she loves to read young adult novels and crochet. When Ms. Jasmine graduates from law school, she wants to continue to teach young people and work as a public interest attorney.



Alexis Nieves
Coordinating Intern

Ms. Alexis Nieves is a rising junior at Yale University. She is from Brooklyn, NY and can most often be found exploring NY museums, local shops, or parks. Alexis is a History major concentrating in Race, Gender, and Sexuality. Outside of classes, she is a board member of the Yale Debate Association and also works on civil rights advocacy projects for the Yale Undergraduate Legal Aid Association. The most exciting fact about Alexis is that she is a Legal Outreach alum from the class of 2022!

Field Trips



Pictured: Students at Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler LLP

Our students started to build their sense of professionalism through weekly field trips to prestigious law firms and legal institutions. These institutions provided mock legal activities that pushed students to utilize their knowledge of the law in unique new ways.

Guest Speakers



Pictured: Students with Sade Famakinwa from Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler LLP

Every Monday through Friday over the summer our classroom was graced with visits from attorney guest speakers. Thank you for helping expand our students' visions for their futures!

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The Appellate Division Courthouse of New York State

During this field trip, students got the opportunity to speak to a variety of Appellate Court Judges who each offered unique advice to guide the students' futures. Specifically, the students heard from Justice Dianne Renwick, Justice Barbara Kapnick, and Justice Ellen Gesmer. The students were able to ask questions to the Justices with topics ranging from dramatic courtroom stories to critically discussing the criminal legal system and its progressive changes throughout the years. Our students came prepared with inquisitive attitudes and open ears!



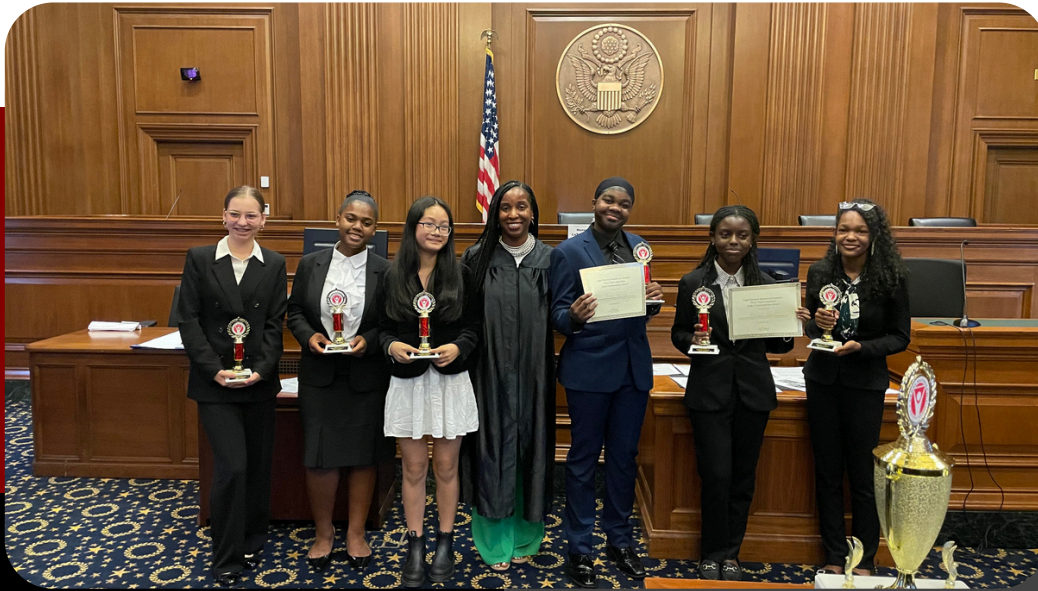
Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler LLP

During our trip to Patterson Belknap, our students learned about the corporate world and activated their knowledge through activities. Students first learned about business structures, then designed their own businesses. Next, students learned about trademarks, then designed their own trademarks or slogans. Finally, the students were taught about nonprofit organizations, and created their own nonprofits to address social issues that are important to them. Our students brought their passion and creativity to the activities and learned a lot.



Mock Trial: Prosecution v. Defense

Students engaged with the knowledge they've learned over the summer through the Mock Trial Competition. Inspired by "the slap heard around the world," our case this year was *State v. Smythe*. In this case, Mr. Bill Smythe was charged with Assault in the Third Degree and Disorderly Conduct after slapping Rick Stone on live television for cracking disrespectful jokes about his wife, Jamie Blue Smythe. The case expanded on the source material in order to be balanced for both sides to argue, including adding the element that the Rick Stone character was acting in an intimidating manner towards Ms. Blue Smythe and the Bill Smythe character continued aggressively disrupting the night's activities after the slap.



Prosecution

Asia Tran
Maleeah Joseph
Nahla McShine
Julia Wasik
Sylvia Milord
Elasia Raymond
Isabelle Dor
Nadia Profitt
Emma Mohammed
Karina Merisier
Yan Yi Zheng Liang
Abigail Segura

Defense

Jaida Germain
Daniela Andrade
Nylah Nash
Miki Gray-Duval
Ka'mira Singletary
Nadja Britton
Madi Gray-Duval
Daneida Medina
Paula Andrade
Tasmiah Islam
Maria Sine
Vaniyah Ruiz
Layla Tabb

The prosecution presented their case, arguing that Mr. Stone was brutally assaulted by Mr. Smythe for no reason and rejected Smythe's self-defense claim by arguing that there was no immediate threat and Smythe had every opportunity to retreat. Defense countered this argument by claiming that as Rick Stone was walking towards the two to apologize, the Smythes saw it as a threat to physically hurt Jamie, and that Mr. Stone had menacingly stalked over to them with a trophy in hand. The defense's argument hinged on the idea Bill Smythe saw this as a threat and thought that Mr. Stone would try to hurt his wife. During the Finals of the competition, Prosecution and Defense passionately presented their arguments in front of the honorable Judge Jenny Rivera of the New York State Court of Appeals, who gave a verdict of guilty.

The Verdict: GUILTY

Our Students

“I feel like I have evolved this summer. My all time favorite thing that happened at SLI was finding my self confidence and making new friends. SLI has really helped me with my fear of public speaking and I can’t express that enough, especially when it came to making new friends. I never really liked the fact that I was super shy, but after SLI I think this shyness has went away for the most part.”

- Sylvia Milord



“During SLI, I learned that no matter if you make mistakes you would be able to fix those mistakes with the help of your teachers and classmates. Everything related to SLI helped me be more confident and not be scared to ask when I need help. Yes, SLI was a bit hard at first because we had to do an essay on day 1. However, I really surprised myself, especially when I was able to finish reading 2 textbooks in less than one month. I will never forget how much I learned this summer.”

- Daneida Medina

Abigail Segura (JHS 202)

Daneida Medina (IS 162)

Daniela Andrade (Great Oaks Charter)

Elasia Raymond (STAR Early College)

Emma Mohammed (Arts and Letters)

Isabelle Dor (Midwood Catholic Academy)

Jaida Germain (Launch Expeditionary Learning Charter School)

Julia Wasik (All City Leadership Secondary School)

Ka'Mira Singletary (Achievement First Endeavor)

Karina Merisier (Prospect Middle School)

Layla Tabb (Macademy School of Science & Technology)

Madison Gray-Duval (Brooklyn Friends School)

Maleeah Joseph (Midwood Catholic Academy)

Maria Sine (Explore charter School)

Michaela Gray-Duval (Brooklyn Friends School)

Nadia Profitt (IS 234)

Nadja Britton (IS 228)

Nahla McShine (J.H.S. 278 Marine Park)

Nylah Nash (Brooklyn Independent)

Paula Andrade (Simon Baruch)

Sylvia Milord (Midwood Catholic Academy)

Tasmiah Islam (IS 381)

Thao Asia Tran (IS 98 Bay Academy)

Vaniyah Ruiz (Arts and Letters)

Yan Yi Zheng Liang (All City Leadership Secondary School)

Final Thoughts & Thank You!

Thanks to all the supporters and sponsors that helped make Legal Outreach's Summer Law Institute possible! Over the past five weeks, our students have truly grown into young professionals who are ready for high school and beyond. Your support allowed these young women to learn not just about criminal justice, but also about the importance of teamwork, confidence, and advocacy. We cannot thank you enough!

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Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP
St. John's School of Law

Guest Speakers

Alex Mahler-Haug - Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler LLP

Julia Kiechel - Johnson & Johnson

Alexis Leist - NY and NJ High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas

Maysa Vahidi - Arbor Realty Trust

Colleen O'Leary - Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler LLP

Bonnie Robinson - Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler LLP

Sneha Desai - Global Litigation & Employment, Stryker

Amin Kassam - Bloomberg LP

Diana Conner - Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler LLP

Sade Famakinwa - Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler LLP

Prof. Conwar - Brooklyn Law School

Rachel Gupta - Gupta Dispute Resolutions

Aissatou Barry - Brooklyn Law School

Aja Pardini - DeBellis Aviv Pardini LLP

Chrishana White - Reading Partners

Alysha Hall - Center for Social Justice, Civil Litigation Clinic

Cristina Piaia - Johnson & Johnson