

SUMMER LAW INSTITUTE

Newsletter

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Empowering a Resilient Sisterhood of Young Women at Cardozo SLI

This summer, 20 bright young women chose to dedicate themselves to studying the criminal justice system at Cardozo Law School. Discovering latent passions, building long lasting friendships, and honing their already impressive debating skills, these students grew every day in this intensive five-week program. Students faced difficult exams, multiple essays, and a competitive mock trial and grew stronger as a result. They may have stumbled, but they always got back up, acquiring a resilience that will be helpful to them as they enter their high school careers and beyond. Their teaching staff were lucky to be able to watch such a brilliant group of girls learn and grow.

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Meet our Team



*Chorouk "Rouk" Akik
Legal Teaching Fellow*

Chorouk "Rouk" Akik is a rising 2L at Fordham Law School from Queens, New York. Mx. Akik received their Bachelors in Media Studies from CUNY Hunter College in 2019 with a concentration in Media Criticism and Analysis. After college, Mx. Rouk worked as a Freelance Journalist and Media Studies adjunct lecturer. They are a proud film, TV and music nerd and love to cook whenever their busy law school schedule allows it. When they finish law school they hope to continue teaching and grow their own production company.



*Shaleana Disorbo
Legal Teaching Fellow*

Shaleana Disorbo is a rising 2L at the City University of Law. She grew up moving around but has roots upstate in the capitol region. Ms. Shaleana always knew she wanted to move to the City, and after years of saving and landing a job at a nonprofit, she was finally able to. When she is not in school, Ms. Shaleana loves going to the beach, museums, and live music. Ms. Shaleana wishes to continue working with young adults through child advocacy work.



*Claudia Kim
Coordinating Intern*

Claudia Kim, the Coordinating Intern at Cardozo this summer, is a rising senior at Barnard College of Columbia University. She is majoring in English and plans to attend law school after receiving her bachelor's. She enjoys reading, writing, and listening to public radio. During the rest of the year, Ms. Kim is an editor on the Columbia Daily Spectator and a Fellow at her school's Writing Center. She looks forward to seeing her students develop a passion for law.

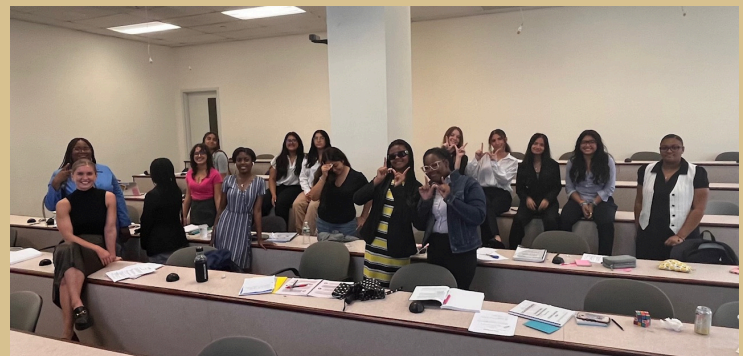
Field Trips



Pictured: Students at Simpson Thacher & Bartlett 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 Keighly Rector from Volunteers of Legal Service

Every Monday through Thursday 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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Field Trips

Thurgood Marshall Courthouse

During this field trip, students got the opportunity to visit and explore the Thurgood Marshall Courthouse. The courthouse's historic ties to Supreme Court justices served as a crucial landmark for the students to learn about the pathways of Supreme court justices, like Sonia Sotomayor. The students toured the courthouse, observing and reading on the exhibitions. Afterwards, they received an educational lesson about informational and reliable sources.



Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP

Our field trip to Simpson Thacher exposed the students to corporate law and moot court. The students were warmly welcomed by a diverse panel of legal professionals who told motivating stories about her journey to law today. For the activity, they were presented a difficult case that allowed them to build and present firm arguments during moot court.

Eastern District of New York Court House

During our trip to EDNY, our students witnessed a Naturalization Ceremony. Students then had the opportunity to have a candid discussion with the Honorable Orelia Merchant. She discussed her background, academic journey, and her experience serving as a judge for one of the busiest federal courts in the country. Next, students spoke with a prosecutor. Finally, they listened in on a live federal criminal case.



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 has been charged with Assault in the Third Degree and Disorderly Conduct after Bill Smythe slapped Rick Stone on live television for cracking disrespectful jokes of his wife, Jamie Blue Smythe. The case expanded on the source material in order to be trickier for both sides to argue, including adding elements where the Rick Stone character was acting in an intimidating manner towards Ms. Blue Smythe and adding in that the Bill Smythe character continued aggressively disrupting the night's activities after the slap.



Prosecution

Thannia Campos
Venus Lima
Daphne Mazuera
Emily Santiago
Isabella Velasquez

Defense

Kathya Abad
Zelyana Francis
Teyona Hughes
Nyla Jenkins
Tobi Pereo

The prosecution presented their case, arguing that Mr. Stone was brutally assaulted by Mr. Smythe for no reason and attempted to reject Smythe's self-defense claim by arguing that there was no immediate threat. Defense countered this argument by claiming that as Rick Stone was walking towards the two to apologize, the Smythe's 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 Justice Lumarie Maldonado-Cruz of the NY State Supreme Court, Civil Term, , who gave a verdict of not guilty.

The Verdict: NOT Guilty

Our Students

I did evolve over this summer with this program. I think this program really did make me happier and more mature. I think before this program I just wasn't myself. This program really made me more responsible. I've changed a lot. I really like the friends I made. I hold these people close to my heart.

- Emily Santiago



I feel like before I came to Cardozo, I did not have the confidence I have now. I was confident, but I always second guessed myself - I always underestimated myself. SLI literally made me change for the better. I feel like a brand new person. The curriculum, the 85% passing cut off, the discipline - all of that was so much more than I was used to. After these five weeks, I have been supported by everyone and I've met people I'll never forget.

- Daphne Mazuera

Abigail Eusebio
School in the Square

Amena Begum
TWYLS Bronx

Beatrice Diaz
Midland Park High School

Daphne Mazuera
Forte Prep

Emily Santiago
Forte Prep

Hadja Saliou
Bronx High School

Isabella Velasquez
IS 230

Jaylin Gonzalez
School in the Square

Kathya Abad
Forte Prep

Beatrice Diaz
Midland Park High School

Katilin Anderson
MS 180

Kyra Herman
MS 180

Lia Marie Dominguez Lubrano
Bronx Latin

Maia Steward
MS 50

Nyla Jenkins
Harlem Village Academy

Sahara Jean-Gilles
Isaac Newton Middle School

Teyona Hughes
Bronx Latin

Thannia Campos
Forte Prep

Tobi Perea
MS 180

Venus Lima
School in the Square

Zelyana Francis
MS 244

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 about the importance of teamwork, confidence, and advocacy. We cannot thank you enough!

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Guest Speakers

Lamarte Williams, Perkins Coie LLP

Gary Eisenberg, Perkins Coie LLP

Carneil Wilson, Dentons

Elizabeth OuYang, New York

University Law School

Jacob Taber, Perkins Coie LLP

Jim Walker, Perkins Coie LLP

James Kainen, Fordham Law School

Ian Weinstein, Fordham Law School

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Shirin Malkani, Perkins Coie LLP

Ali Mirsaidi, Perkins Coie LLP

Bobbie Brown, Young New Yorkers

Mariama Sidique, Clausen Miller

Diane Brayton, The New York Times

Brian Rideout, The New York Times

Al-Amyn Sumar, The New York Times

Rachel Mechanic, Perkins Coie LLP

Adam Mandelsberg, Perkins Coie LLP

Keighly Rector, Volunteers of Legal Service

Babe Howell, CUNY Law