

SUMMER LAW INSTITUTE

Newsletter

In This Issue

SLI at NYU Law School Overview

Meet the Staff

Guest Speakers & Field Trips

Mock Trial

Our Students

Final Thoughts & Thank You



Building Confidence and Community for Young Men at NYU SLI

On Monday, July 1st, our cohort of young men walked into our classroom for the first day of the Summer Law Institute. NYU Law School partnered with Legal Outreach to help facilitate this rigorous five-week program. Over the course of the summer, students learned about the criminal justice system and the structure of criminal trials from their instructors. Through intensive study and essay writing, as well as guest speakers and virtual field trips, the NYU Law School Summer Law Institute's twenty-one graduates gained insight into their rights, responsibilities, and potential future careers.

In the program's final week, our students put their new knowledge to the test by preparing for and competing in a Mock Trial presided over by the Honorable Judge Derefim Neckles for the semi-finals and the Honorable Judge George B. Daniels for the finals. Our twenty-one graduates demonstrated poise, confidence, and personal growth, in addition to the legal knowledge they have developed over the summer.

Our Sponsors:

SIMPSON
THACHER

Frink-Hammett

crowell  moring

KIRKLAND & ELLIS

Meet the Staff



Anthony Hernandez
Legal Teaching Fellow

A rising 2L at Brooklyn Law School and is from New York City. He started his professional career as an actor actually, studying at Syracuse University, then proceeded to work part-time at El Puente Beacon with a myriad of jobs. With finding that he wanted to provide more support for their community, he decided to head to law school to see what he can learn and pass on to others. He's excited for this summer and very eager to get to know everyone.



Dionis Jahjaga
Legal Teaching Fellow

A rising 2L at Fordham (Class of 2026) and is hoping to go into litigation. He was born in Kosovo, but his family immigrated to New York, where he grew up and went to school. As a kid, he benefited so much from summer and after-school programs like SLI, so he's very excited to give back in a similar way. He's looking forward to working with other passionate people to make a formative impact on the students this summer. In his increasingly limited spare-time, he likes to follow NBA basketball (ask him how he ended up a Boston Celtics fan in NYC) and professional chess. He also has a little black cat named Koh, The Face-Stealer.



Ricardo Reyna
Coordinating Intern

A rising senior at Vassar College from San Antonio, Texas. Observing the need for better access to legal representation in the Latino community, Mr. Reyna was a founding member of The Legal Legacy Project, a student-run 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to providing free legal services on weekends to underserved communities across San Antonio. He is excited to work with students this summer and share that passion with them. Additionally, Mr. Reyna is a collegiate baseball player and an avid San Antonio Spurs fan.

Guest Speakers & Field Trips

Our students thoroughly enjoyed all of the guest speakers who visited our classroom this Summer, either in person, or virtual. Speakers taught students about the exciting world of constitution law, immigration law, and the intersectionality of the law with personal freedom. Students also learned professional skills such as public speaking, negotiation, critical thinking skills, and advocacy skills. Hearing from our guest speakers and visiting various institutions for our field trips inspired students to reach for the stars and enlightened them about how they can make a difference in their communities.



cont'd p.3

Thurgood Marshall Courthouse

During this trip, the students were taken on a tour of the courthouse. They also got the chance to learn about distinguished Supreme Court justices such as Thurgood Marshall and Sonia Sotomayor. The large part of the trip featured a discussion about Thurgood Marshall himself and the impact that he had on the criminal justice world. The students were able to see that impact through different activities including watching his life through a screen.



Crowell



Our field trip to Crowell tested students' growing knowledge of legal principles and advocacy. Earlier that week, students began to work on their mock trial arguments and this trip put those foundations to the test. Pitted against each other the students had a mock appellate trial, in which they were advocating for whether or not it was right for an athlete to kneel during a national anthem. Based on real world evidence, both sides did well to explore different avenues in hopes that their "client" would win.

Simpson Thacher

During this trip, students had the opportunity to listen to a panel with a variety of legal specialists. Students asked questions about different types of law such as contract and corporate law. Afterwards, students prepared for an activity that required them to debate a hypothetical criminal law case. Working closely with actual attorneys on staff, the students came up with arguments to defend their "clients," which were argued later in front of a judge. By collaborating and using proper procedure, students enhanced their public speaking and critical thinking skills over the course of this trip.



Mock Trial Finals: Prosecution 1 vs. Defense 1

Students prepared for weeks for their Mock Trial, which was presided over by the Honorable George B. Daniels. In the case, *State v. Smyth*, Mr. Bill Smyth has been charged with Assault in the Third Degree and Disorderly Conduct after an argument with an ELMOs awards host, Mr. Rick Stone. Mr. Stone reports that Mr. Smyth walked up on stage during his comedic hosting and slapped him across the face in front of everyone watching the award show. Mr. Smyth argues self-defense, noting that Mr. Stone was walking towards him and his wife in an intimidating manner.



Prosecution One

Jayden Lopez
Aldry Capellan
Dante Bahena
DeNeyan Brown
Alexis Gerardo
Ethan Torres

Defense One

Zachary Gil
Jaden McClymont
Souleymane Barry
Rayhan Arce
Masen Perez

The prosecution presented their case, arguing that the slap was unjustified because Mr. Stone was a guest host, and one of the jobs of the guest host was that they were supposed to be making jokes towards the audience; meaning that the alleged threat of walking towards the family and making remarks was nonexistent. Both Mr. Stone and a witness named Ms. Monster both testified to this. The defense brought in the argument that this was a legitimate threat to the prior history between the Smyth family and Mr. Stone. Mr. and Mrs. Smyth both testified to this behalf and gave insight that they had reasonable belief that the actions of Mr. Stone on that night were that of a threatening manner, and therefore the slap was in self-defense of Mrs. Smyth.

The Verdict: NOT GUILTY

Our Students

“As the program comes to an end, I feel like I have evolved. I have developed many new skills; like better communicative skills, understanding of the law and how to use it to defend myself, time management, but also some life directions. All of these skills I know will be helpful towards my future. These will be helpful as I go into high school and beyond. I met relatable teachers, had lots of fun, and had many funny moments.”

- Dante Bahena (Pictured far right)



“At first, I started off as very shy and quiet, not knowing anything about law. Indeed, I have changed a lot. I’m not as shy as I used to be... I have also learned tons of stuff about law such as Objections, Miranda Rights, Evidence, Bail procedure, etc... My voice has also increased, as I now speak louder and more confident than I used to. Everything SLI had to offer had a great impact.”

- Rayhan Arce (Pictured middle)

Aldry Capellan
School in the Square

Decoda Ennis
MS 180

Jared Martinez
CIS303

Rayhan Arce
Emolior Academy

Alexis Gerardo
Explore Charter School

Deneyan Brown
MS 180

Jayden Lopez
School in the Square

Souleymane Barry
Emolior Academy

Avery Cooper
Benjamin Franklin

Dijaun Bent
JHS 144

Jesse Gil
East Side Community School

Wilson Ceballos
IS 145

Christopher Orival
The Queens College
School for Math, Science
and Technology PS/IS
499Q

Ethan Torres
Mott Hall 2

Jonathan Sanchez
Emolior Academy

Zachary Gil
Hamilton Grange

Dante Bahena
IS 162

Ethan Harriott
KIPP Freedom Academy

Masen Pérez
Emolior Academy

Jaden McClymont
Ebbets Field MS

Micah Guerrier
MS 180

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 men to learn not just about criminal justice, but about the importance of teamwork, confidence, and advocacy. We cannot thank you enough!

Sponsors & Partners

SIMPSON
THACHER

Frink-Hamlett

crowell moring

KIRKLAND & ELLIS

Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law

Bloomberg LP

Burt Lipshie, Stroock & Stroock & Lavan LLP

Colgate-Palmolive Company

Columbia Community Service

Columbia Law School

Crowell & Moring Foundation

CUNY School of Law

Duane Morris

Fordham University School of Law

Frink-Hamlett Legal Solutions

Jeff Colt, Bronx District Attorney's Office

Mintz Levin

Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP

New York Bar Foundation

New York County District Attorney's Office

New York Life Insurance Company

New York University School of Law

Proskauer Rose LLP

Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP

St. John's School of Law

Guest Speakers

Dean Troy McKenzie, NYU School of Law

Joshua Franklin, Franklin & Associates

Massiel Ramos, Legal Outreach

Brandon Kronstat, Legal Outreach

Darieana Hunter, Federal Bureau of Investigation

Carter Stewart, Mellon Foundation

Sandy Santana, Children's Rights Organization

Marlon Becerra, Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP

Warren Allen II, Miles & Stockbridge

Deveraux Cannick, Aiello & Cannick

Eric St. Bernard, Kirkland & Ellis LLP

Nate Saint-Victor, Engine No. 1

Donal Cogdell, KINGS