

SUMMER LAW INSTITUTE

Newsletter

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Empowering a Resilient Sisterhood of Young Women at St. John's SLI

For the summer of 2024, 20 bright young women made their way to St. John's 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.

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Meet the Staff



Lindsey Weiss
Legal Teaching Fellow

Mx. Lindsey Weiss is a rising 2L student at Cardozo School of Law. Lindsey chose to study law after 6 seasons in agricultural work, where they were exposed to the many legal, social, economic, and environmental issues implicating our food system. Originally from Fresh Meadows, Lindsey was thrilled to teach students from the same neighborhoods they grew up around. Lindsey graduated college from Northwestern University in 2018.



Emma Cohen
Legal Teaching Fellow

Ms. Emma Cohen is a rising 2L at Brooklyn Law School. Emma chose to study law after a career in Education, where she taught early elementary reading. She hopes to work within family law and eventually work in education policy. Emma graduated from The George Washington University in 2019 and received her Masters in Teaching at the Relay Graduate School of Education in 2021.



Fatima Khan
Coordinating Intern

A rising college sophomore at Columbia University. She is an alumna of Legal Outreach Class of 2023 and participated in the Brooklyn Summer Law Institute. In the future, she wants to attend law school to become a lawyer to advocate for silenced and oppressed communities. Her hobbies include reading and baking.

Field Trips



Pictured: Students at Workday

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 Tanya Blocker from National Grid

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

Nassau County Courthouse

During this field trip, students got the opportunity to visit and explore the Nassau County Courthouse. The courthouse allowed the students to realize a lot of what they had been learning in class, from voir dire to trial. The students toured the courthouse, observing and reading on the exhibitions. Afterwards, they received an educational lesson about the importance of jury duty.



Duane Morris LLP

Our field trip to Duane Morris exposed the students to corporate law and work-life balance. The students were warmly welcomed by the managing partner who told a motivating story about his journey to law today. As pizza was served, the students had a lunch and learn as they listened to the compelling and inspiring stories of the attorneys.

Workday

During our trip to Workday, our students learned and activated their knowledge through creativity. Students first learned about online safety and data breaches. Next, students learned about contract, then were able negotiate their own contracts for an activity. Finally, they were able to go to the top of the Empire State building alongside Workday attorneys. 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 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

Milan White
Rebecca Li
Sophia Cochy
Heeta Kalantri
Valarie Au
Karol Romero

Supervising Coach: Lindsey Weiss

Defense

Umme Hossain
Jean Pan
Kimberly Playter
Aiesha Edmunds
Kelsey Fernandez
Makayla Robinson

Supervising Coach: Emma Cohen

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 Judge John Lansden of the New York State Court of Appeals, who gave a verdict of Guilty.

The Verdict: Guilty

Our Students

Coming into SLI, I didn't know what to expect and how to handle all the work plus trying to have a "good summer."

Shortly after joining, I did realize I had to make a lot of choices that resulted in me becoming who I am today... A

lot of people might say a month can't change your perspective on life as a whole, but I disagree. SLI made a huge impact on me and my life, making me see things clearly and what I now want my career choice to be.

- *Milan White*



The work was tough and a lot, but it was fun. The essays, for me, were an opportunity to share my argument and my perspective on controversial topics. Learning about the law was interesting and completely different from school.... SLI changed my work ethic and changed the way I view work. I still have my moments where I question some things in life, but I know my future is in my hands.

- *Heeta Kalantri*

Aiesha Edmunds
Louis Armstrong Middle School

Aneesha Sunnah
MS 358

Ashley Andoh
PS 270 Gordon Parks

Heeta Kalantri
JHS 157- Halsey

Jayda Bailey McCall
JHS 157-Halsey

Jean Pan
JHS 189

K'Alee Powell
IS 192

Karol Romero
Forte Prep

Kelsey Fernandez
Northeastern Adventist Academy Queens
Linden SDA

Makayla Robinson
Riverton Street Charter

Kimberly Playtor
PS 124

Milan White
IS 192

Rebecca Li
JHS 74 Nathaniel Hawthorne

Santovia Jackson
IS 192

Sophia Cochy
Valley Stream Christain
Academy

Umme Hossain
IS 230
Valarie Au
JHS 190 Russell Sage

Victoria Keller
IS 230

Yashica Bowyer
IS 59

Yogita Singh
MS 137-School of Heroes

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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Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP
Nassau County Courthouse

Guest Speakers

Abigail Molos, St. John's Admissions Office
Melissa Stoll, St. John's Law School Admissions Office
Christina Falco, Mattone, Mattone & Mattone LLP
Douglas Leff, SI Global Partners
Thomas Principe, Kramer Dillof Livingston Moore
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