

SUMMER LAW INSTITUTE

Newsletter

In This Issue

SLI at Cardozo School of Law Overview

Meet the Staff

Guest Speakers & Field Trips

Mock Trial

Our Students

Final Thoughts & Thank You



Empowering a Resilient Sisterhood of Young Women at Cardozo SLI

For the summer of 2025, 25 bright young women made their way to Cardozo School of Law'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:

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Meet the Staff



Autumn Mena
Legal Teaching Fellow

Ms. Autumn Mena is a rising 3L at Brooklyn Law School. Ms. Autumn graduated from Brooklyn College in 2022 with her Bachelor's in Business Administration and Finance and just graduated from a Master's Program in International and European Business Law. She is fluent in Spanish and loves all things fashion!



Dina Bodner
Legal Teaching Fellow

Ms. Dina is a rising 3L at Brooklyn Law School and is from Florida. Ms. Dina graduated from New York University in 2022 where she got a Masters in Art and Public Policy. When she is not in school, Ms. Dina loves painting and drawing. When she graduates from law school, Ms. Dina wants to continue working with policy surrounding the American education system!



Ella Dotzler
Coordinating Intern

Ms. Ella Dotzler is a rising senior at Harvard College and is from small town Minnesota. She is majoring in Government and History and plans to attend law school after receiving her bachelor's. She enjoys ballet, trying new foods, and playing tennis. At Harvard, she is heavily involved on The Harvard Crimson Business Board and serves as Business Manager for Harvard Model Congress.

Field Trips



Pictured: Students at Perkins Coie 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 Liz OuYang, OCA-NY Asian Pacific American Advocates

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!

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 heard from two guest speakers and then had the opportunity to participate in a mini mock trial about Cinderella's stolen slipper!



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 the managing partner who told a motivating story 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.

Perkins Coie LLP

During our trip to Perkins Coie LLP, our students learned and activated their knowledge through creativity. After hearing from attorneys ranging from trust and estates to general litigation, our students learned about all facets of the law, growing in experience and knowledge along the way.



Mock Trial: Prosecution v. Defense

Students applied the knowledge they developed over the summer during this year's Mock Trial competition, which centered around the high-profile case *State v. Bennett*. In this scenario, influencer Jay Bennett was charged with Riot in the First Degree following a chaotic giveaway event he organized in a public park. Thousands of fans flocked to the event, far exceeding the permitted limit. Inspired by real-world conversations about the responsibility of public figures, the case challenged students to navigate complex questions of intent and public safety. Additional complications made the case even more thought-provoking, including disputed witness credibility, social media dynamics, and questions surrounding crowd control. The case gave both prosecution and defense teams plenty to wrestle with as they crafted arguments grounded in the law.



Prosecution

Eilen Mora, Mott Hall 3
Tajmin Habib, I.S. 230
Rupomi Riti, I.S. 230
Maite Martinez, I.S. 230
Leslie Delaguila, I.S. 230
Briana Bermejo, I.S. 230
Talia David, JHS 144 - Michelangelo
Blake Daley, PS 276
Sofia Bacuilima, Forte Preparatory Academy
Filza Raza, Achievement First Endeavor Middle School
Samragyi Rokka, Forte Preparatory Academy
Namira Khan, I.S. 230

Defense

Lamia Anzum, I.S. 230
Leslie Chaves, I.S. 230
Ayuko Kusumi, Forte Preparatory Academy
Aimar Espino-Gomez, Emolior
Esther Ayala, Mott Hall 3
Odhiti Das, I.S. 230
Ryleigh Wright, School of the Holy Child
Afrida Khan, I.S. 125 Thom J. McCann Woodside
Nelly Iivas, Forte Preparatory Academy
Sofia Santana, H. Frank Carey Junior Senior High School
Izzi Molina, Emolior
Caliyah Cummings, Kipp All Middle School
Matilda Ponce, I.S. 230

The prosecution argued that Bennett's reckless promotion and poor planning of the "Turn Up, Downtown" event directly led to a violent riot in Alliance Square, causing serious injuries and significant property damage. They emphasized that Bennett continued encouraging the crowd, even after signs of disorder were emerging. In response, the defense maintained that Bennett had no intention of causing harm and was unaware of the chaos unfolding due to soundproofing and a muted phone. They contended that Bennett attempted to regain control as soon as he realized the severity of the situation. During the Finals of the competition, both Prosecution and Defense delivered compelling and passionate arguments, demonstrating their deep understanding of the law and the facts of the case.

Our Students

This summer has been an amazing experience for me. Meeting new people, learning about the law, and having a new experience was so incredibly rewarding. We also had the most amazing teachers, Ms. Ella, Ms. Dina, and Ms. Autumn to guide us was an amazing gift.

- *Blake Daley*



My experience at the SLI was rewarding and full of growth. Not only did I learn many things academically, I also learned how to work well with others and speak in front of a crowd with confidence. Some of my highlights from this summer were visiting law firms and having the privilege to meet and talk to attorneys about their careers and experiences. I also loved how during open-discussions, I felt comfortable enough to freely express my opinion and listen to other people's perspectives that differed from my own. Overall, SLI was an enjoyable and extremely useful experience to prepare me for high school and years ahead.

- *Sofia Santana*

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I.S. 125 Thom McCann Woodside

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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

Paul Kim, Perkins Coie LLP

Guy Joseph, Perkins Coie LLP

Shirin Malkani, Perkins Coie LLP

Ali Mirsaidi, Perkins Coie LLP

Gary Eisenberg, Perkins Coie LLP

Nicolas Schmidt, Perkins Coie LLP

Alexis Shankman, Perkins Coie LLP

Sarah Ross, Perkins Coie LLP

Elizabeth OuYang, OCA-NY Asian Pacific American Advocates

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