

News & Events

High School Students Learn About Law Careers at CBA's LAW Camp

During the week of July 8-12, the CBA hosted its first in-person LAW camp since 2019 in New Haven for a group of 36 Connecticut high school students. LAW Camp exposes high school students to the legal profession and teaches them critical and analytical thinking to help them succeed in their educational and professional careers.

During the weeklong camp, the students heard presentations and participated in activities with numerous Connecticut Bar Association member attorneys and judges who volunteered to participate in the camp. The camp's events were held at the Elm City Club, New Haven Superior Courthouse, and New Haven U.S. District Courthouse as well as the New Haven offices of Shipman & Goodwin, Day Pitney, Halloran & Sage, Withers Berman, and Updike Kelly & Spellacy.

On the first day of the camp, the attending students learned about the legal profession and heard from attorneys, law students, and career advisors on how to pursue and achieve a successful career in the law and the different communities and groups, such as bar associations, that support attorneys. They also learned about the Connecticut Court System and the processes and procedures involved in court proceedings.

Over the course of the next several days, the students participated in exercises related to conducting opening and closing statements and direct and cross-examinations; heard presentations on the specific roles of lawyers, judges, and the jury in court; and observed real court arraignments and criminal proceedings.

The students were also split into groups to prepare for the camp's culminating event, a two-round mock trial competition.

Friday began with the mock trial competition's preliminary round. The two winning groups of this round went on to present their arguments in the final round before Supreme Court Chief Justice Richard A. Robinson inside the New Haven U.S. District Courthouse. Before determining a winner, Chief Justice Robinson congratulated all the students on their performance in the competition, stating "We're trying to build pipelines and build future lawyers and future judges, and I really hope you all consider the legal profession. We could really use you. I promise you that you are all very, very good." After announcing the winning team, Chief Justice Robinson recounted his own career path from law school all the way to being appointed as the state supreme court chief justice and answered questions from the students.

The week-long camp ended with a reception, where CBA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Co-Chair and Law Camp Chair Ronald J. Houde, Jr. presented each of the attending students and camp counselors with a certificate celebrating their participation in LAW Camp. "I absolutely loved [LAW Camp]," said one camper, Sandra. "I had a lot of fun and made many new friends. I learned so much about law and legal careers and gained so much knowledge.... [T]his opportunity was an amazing one, and I am so lucky to have this experience."



The Connecticut high school students who attended the 2024 LAW Camp gathered at the New Haven Federal Courthouse for the final round of the camp's mock trial competition.

Upcoming Education Calendar

Register at ctbar.org/CLE

OCTOBER

- 9 Strategic Planning for Law Firm Success: Building a Profitable and Sustainable Practice**
- 18 What Great Lawyers Do at Mediations**
- 23 Overcoming Addiction and Resources for Connecticut Attorneys** ♦
- 24 2024 Connecticut Bankruptcy Conference** ♦
- 25 2024 Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Summit: The Collaborative Blueprint** ♦
- 31 Federal Practice Bench/Bar Symposium**

NOVEMBER

- 1 Ethical Marketing: Building Your Practice - Complying with Attorney Advertising Rules** ♦

6 Our House: Tips for Working Effectively with In-House Counsel

8 Workers' Compensation Medical Conference: Workplace Injuries: Treatment Tailored for a Swift Recovery

14 2024 Federal Tax Institute of New England ♦

21-22 Appellate Advocacy Institute

DECEMBER

5 2024 Professionalism Boot Camp ♦

♦ *Ethics credit available*

CLE PASS ELIGIBLE: For more information about the CLE Pass, visit ctbar.org/CLEPass.

DON'T MISS THE PREMIER EVENT FOR ESTATE PLANNING AND TAX ATTORNEYS

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14

SAINT CLEMENTS CASTLE
PORTLAND, CT

National speakers will present on cutting-edge tax and estate planning issues. This year's program includes a full-day track for estates and probate paralegals and a track for young lawyers.

REGISTER TODAY AT CTBAR.ORG/2024FTNE

2024

FEDERAL
Connecticut Bar Association TAX
INSTITUTE
OF NEW
ENGLAND

CBA HOSTS 2024 RULE OF LAW CONFERENCE AS PART OF THE ABA TASK FORCE ON AMERICAN DEMOCRACY LISTENING TOUR

On September 4, 2024, the CBA hosted its fifth Rule of Law Conference, and the first held in person since 2018, at the state's Legislative Office Building in Hartford. The event was hosted collaboratively with the American Bar Association (ABA) as part of the ABA Task Force on American Democracy Listening Tour, which has been composed of events across the country that discuss how to bolster confidence in American elections and officials, educate the public on American democracy and the rule of law, and suggest ideas on how to strengthen democracy and our elections. The conference consisted of an introduction from ABA Immediate Past President Mary Smith, four panel discussions on various topics related to the rule of law, and a keynote address from former United States Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh C. Johnson.

IN HER INTRODUCTION to the conference, ABA Past President Smith emphasized the importance of the ABA's listening tour and how it has encouraged the local legal communities of several states to come together to ensure free and fair elections. She noted how the ABA Task Force on American Democracy has encouraged lawyers in hundreds of associations nationwide to assist in, "...rebuilding trust in our elections, educating the public on the rule of law and how democracy and the constitution underpin what we all value in our everyday lives" and she emphasized that American lawyers, "...must now answer the clarion call to defend American democracy and the rule of law."

Following the opening remarks, ABA Past President Smith and Lawyers Defending American Democracy Executive Director and ABA Task Force for American Democracy Advisory Committee Vice Chair Lauren Stiller Rikleen participated in the panel discussion, What Lawyers Can Do to Sustain Our Democracy, moderated by CBA President James T. (Tim) Shearin. The panel began with Director Rikleen explaining the origin and mission of Lawyers Defending American Democracy, a non-partisan organization formed in 2019 in response to public calls asking for legal professionals to defend against ongoing attacks on the rule of law and the integrity of American elections. She described



(L to R) Past CBA President Monte E. Frank, ABA Immediate Past President Mary Smith, and CBA President James T. (Tim) Shearin

several projects that the organization has undertaken, including collaborations with the ABA, that inform the public about alarming restrictions of freedoms at the state and federal levels and promote American civic education. During the panel, Smith and Rikleen answered questions from various attendees on the initiatives and plans being implemented to help secure future elections and promote public civic literacy.

THE CONFERENCE'S SECOND

PANEL, The Role of Media in The Age of Misinformation/Disinformation, was moderated by attorney and host of WFSB's public affairs program, CT24, Eric Parker, and included Hartford Courant Executive Editor Helen I. Bennett, attorney and former journalist Megan Nielsen, and WTNH anchor/reporter Kathryn Hauser. The panelists discussed the challenges reporters face in accurately relaying the complex details and major takeaways of legal cases and decisions. They noted that most journalists do not have a professional background in law and therefore often lack an understanding of the norms and intricacies of specific legal procedures. The panelists argued that, while many attorneys avoid communicating with the media, doing so to provide critical context and explanations of the complexities involved in cases and issues being covered can be beneficial. They explained that such communications can prevent damaging mischaracterizations of clients as well as enhance relations with the public and the press. The panelists also discussed the increasing difficulty journalists face in covering opposing sides of political issues as extreme polarization often brings even the basic facts of an issue or event into dispute.

THE CONFERENCE'S THIRD PANEL discussion, Electoral Reforms to Increase Voter Participation, Reward Good Behavior, and Reduce Polarization, was moderated by past CBA President Monte E. Frank and included Connecticut Secretary of the State Stephanie Thomas and Unite America Executive Director Nick Troiano. The panelists answered questions from past CBA President Frank and explained how changes to electoral procedures can help to reduce nefarious behavior from politicians, increase voter participation, and lessen polarization. Secretary Thomas pointed to expanded voter registra-

tion policies and increased funding for civics education as preferred methods for increasing election turnout and engagement, while Director Troiano described the research that has led him to conclude that open primaries and ranked-choice voting would provide effective counters against the current climate of political polarization.

THE FINAL PANEL DISCUSSION of the conference, moderated by past CBA President Jonathan M. Shapiro, focused on the concept of judicial independence and included U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut Chief Judge Michael P. Shea; Connecticut Appellate Court Chief Judge William H. Bright, Jr.; and U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut Judge Alvin W. Thompson. Judge Shea began the panel by discussing the importance of maintaining an independent judiciary and cautioning against sudden calls for changes to the judiciary system based on a single controversial ruling. Chief Judge Bright further emphasized the importance of discerning between criticizing the outcome of a judgment and criticizing the judicial process itself. “It is fine to say there are better things we can do in the judicial process and it is fine to suggest changes. That is completely different, though, than saying, ‘I lost because the system is corrupt. I lost because the judge is biased. I lost because the judge is part of a cabal that is trying to help lawyers make money and only certain lawyers make money,’” stated Chief Judge Bright. “I’ve heard all of those publicly and some directed towards me or my colleagues and those types of comments undermine the independence of the judiciary and the perception of the bench and the work that we do.”

The Rule of Law Conference culminated with the keynote address presented by former United States Secretary of Homeland Security and co-chair of the ABA Task Force for American Democracy Jeh C. Johnson. Secretary Johnson began his keynote by speaking in favor of efforts toward bipartisanship. He highlighted how much the success and stability of the United States depends on the quality of our political officials. “We know today that our democracy is fragile. Much of our democracy is grey and depends very much on leaders who are reasonable, prudent, and responsible,” stated Secretary Johnson. While concluding his address, Johnson asserted that, “Americans do have to accept sooner or later something as truth, about who we are and our nation and what happens in this country,” and called upon the lawyers present to get involved in civics education and ensuring election integrity.

View the 2024 ABA Task Force on American Democracy Listening Tour/CBA Rule of Law Conference in full through the CBA’s YouTube Channel (@ConnecticutBarAssociationCBA).



(L to R) U.S. District Court Judge Alvin W. Thompson; Connecticut Appellate Court Chief Judge William H. Bright, Jr.; Past CBA President Jonathan M. Shapiro; U.S. District Court Chief Judge Michael P. Shea



(L to R) Helen I. Bennett, Kathryn Hauser, Eric Parker, and Megan Nielsen



(L to R) CBA Past President Monte E. Frank and Connecticut Secretary of the State Stephanie Thomas

Former United States Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh C. Johnson provided the keynote address for the conference.



YLS Leaders Attend 2024 Annual Leadership Retreat and Receive Service Awards

The Connecticut Bar Association's Young Lawyers Section (YLS) hosted its annual leadership retreat on August 9-10 at Foxwoods Casino in Ledyard. The YLS Executive Committee holds this event each summer to familiarize new members of the committee with the duties of their leadership roles and to present awards to members of the committee for their service during the previous bar year.

During the event, Connecticut Superior Court judge and past CBA President Hon. Cecil J. Thomas provided the keynote presentation *Answering the Call to Servant Leadership: 10 Lessons Learned Along the Way*. Judge Thomas shared that during his tenure in the leadership of the CBA, he committed himself to furthering diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts and initiatives within the association, making significant progress on these issues. He conveyed the major lessons he learned through his experiences, providing 10 essential tips to the attending young lawyers on how to develop and grow as effective leaders. "What I have come to appreciate is that despite the difference in our outward presentation, our leadership styles reflect a common commitment to service to others," stated Judge Thomas during his presentation. "In my own leadership journey, I have kept the idea of spreading your sunshine in mind. I have been lifted up by the kind words and affirmations of others throughout my journey and I realized that, in my own way, I could do the same for others."

In addition to the keynote speech and the various trainings held throughout the day, the event included the presentation of awards to nine YLS Executive Committee members for their service during the 2023-2024 bar year. 2023-2024 YLS Chair Sara J. O'Brien presented the recipients with their awards.

Star of the Year Award

John M. Russo, Jr. received a Star of the



(L to R) YLS Secretary Jermaine A. Brookshire, Jr.; 2023-2024 YLS Chair Sara J. O'Brien; YLS Chair-Elect Paige Vaillancourt; YLS Treasurer Sara Bonaiuto

Year Award for his work and effort as a membership director. He planned and organized the YLS's non-CLE networking events, organized the YLS Summer Softball team, and assembled a YLS team for the New Haven County Bar Association's Snowball Charity Softball Tournament.

Alison J. Toumekian received a Star of the Year Award for her work as an American Bar Association delegate. She assisted in the planning of the YLS's Northeast Regional Professional Development Conference for Young Lawyers, using her professional connections with the ABA to bring prominent national speakers to the conference.

Leadership Award

Andrew Glass and **Nicole Fluckiger** received Leadership Awards for their work as co-directors for law school outreach, notably incorporating law students into YLS events and encouraging their continued involvement with the CBA throughout their education and after their graduation.

Caroline Boisvert received a Leadership Award for her service as co-director of CLE programming. Through her provision of support to those planning

programs and her coordination with the CBA staff, the YLS Executive Committee was able to organize nearly 20 CLE programs throughout the 2023-2024 bar year.

Volunteer of the Year Award

Brittany Bisson and **Jermaine Brookshire** each received a Volunteer of the Year Award for collectively providing over 400 hours of pro bono and public service work, which significantly contributed to the section achieving its goal of providing at least 1,000 hours of pro bono services for the third year in a row.

Rookie of the Year Award

Olivia Benson received a Rookie of the Year Award for her impressive achievements during her first year on the YLS Executive Committee, which included co-chairing the CBA Bankruptcy Section and building the connection between the Bankruptcy Section and the YLS.

Angie Gadziala received a Rookie of the Year Award for her work during her first year on the YLS Executive Committee planning and hosting a well-attended, in-person event covering health law topics at UConn School of Law. ■