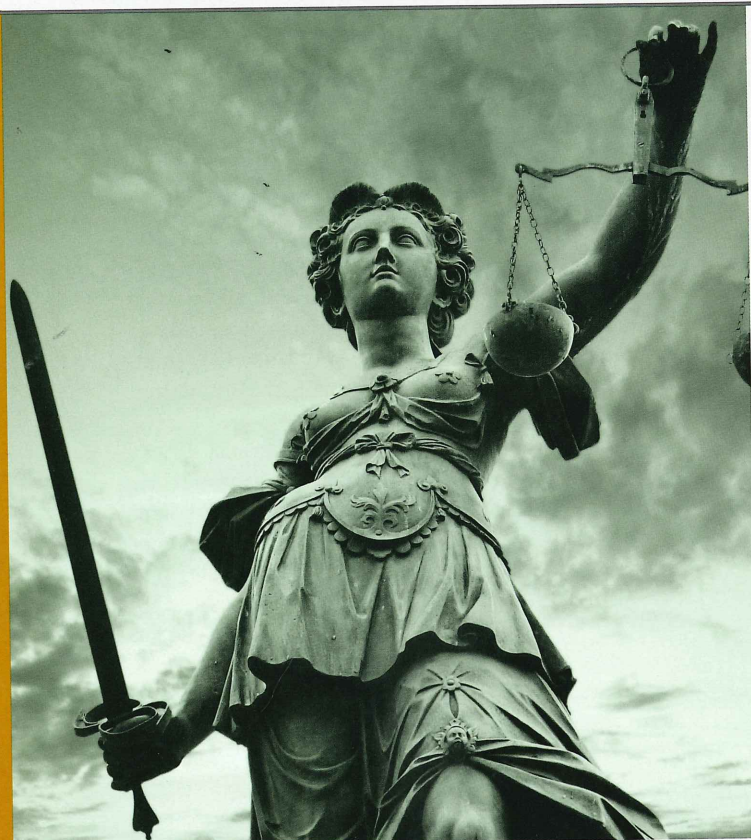


INSTITUTE FOR LEGISLATIVE AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

SUMMARY OF EVENTS FOR SPRING 2014



For the eighth year, the School of Law cosponsored the annual Northeast Regional Fair Housing and Civil Rights Conference, which has grown to a major event. Attendance this year exceeded 500 participants. The two-day gathering also marked the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The workshops at the Conference covered a wide range of topics currently on the front burner of civil rights and fair housing. Included were sessions on disability law, public and private enforcement, and human trafficking. Other topics included urban health, community development, veterans affairs, and fair employment practices.

The Conference also featured notable speakers, such as Dick Gregory, activist and comedian; Attorney Jacqueline Berrien, Chair, U.S. EEOC; Harvard Law Professor Charles Ogletree; Ms. Carmen Ortiz, U.S. Attorney for Massachusetts; Dr. Rodney Hood, expert on health and race; and Professor Lawrence Watson, teacher, artist, performer, and cultural historian.

This summer we hosted two students from Siena College in another annual program that is designed to expose undergraduates to the work of attorneys and law professors. We had two very talented rising seniors working with Dean Emeritus Arthur Gaudio, and Professor Myra Orlen.



Lindsey Boyle (left) studied with Professor Gaudio, focusing on recent changes to certain HUD regulations (X and Z). At the beginning of her research, she educated herself, under Professor Gaudio's expert guidance, in mortgage/real estate law. Lindsey learned how to read and understand complicated regulatory text.

While going through the HUD regulations, Lindsey noticed that many of the changes and additions had to do with reverse mortgage transactions. Professor Gaudio taught her the rudiments of reverse mortgages and gave Lindsey some reading and research topics. He was looking for some answers to specific questions, such as the benefits and burdens of reverse mortgages, their marketing, and consumer protection for them.



Taylor Cuomo (left) worked with Professor Orlen on her summer research. The project focused on the relationship between the judicial captioning of cases and the manner in which they are processed and resolved. She began by updating Professor Orlen's earlier chart of the states' formats on captioning for family court, specifically divorce cases. Some states had the typical adversarial captioning, "plaintiff v. defendant." In contrast, other states used a less adversarial caption, "in re the marriage of" (43, Cal. 4th 751-2008).

After completing the chart, Taylor moved to the next part of the research: to determine if different captioning styles (adversarial vs. less adversarial) impact the outcome of the case. Do the more adversarial captions actually create priming that makes the outcome of the case worse than if a less adversarial caption had been used? Taylor found many informative articles using a variety of databases, including Westlaw, JSTOR, ASP, and expanded academic ASAP.

The articles divided into distinct categories: (1) social sciences (psychology and cognitive sciences): how "labeling" can impact receipt of information and affect the outcome of specific inquiries; (2) literature: how titles affect our perception of a piece of writing; and (3) legal scholarship: the impact of metaphor on the resolution of disputes. The scholarly pieces supported the hypothesis that captioning in court cases does indeed have an effect on judicial disposition. ♦