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PRESS RELEASE

From the classroom to the courtroom

Legal Aid, Seventh District Court of Appeals join forces to prepare law students

Summer is a time when students traditionally take a break from learning. But this summer, fourteen law students have spent their time in an immersive learning experience at Community Legal Aid.

CLA's Summer Associate Program gives students first-hand experience working with clients and local courts.

This experience includes collaborating with courts, such as the Seventh District Court of Appeals.

"We are thrilled to offer these students a glimpse of the appellate practice," said Judge Gene Donofrio, Presiding and Administrative Judge at the Seventh District Court. "We hope the experience provided insight into actual courtroom practice and perhaps, even bolstered the confidence of these future lawyers."

Students observed oral arguments at the Seventh District Court of Appeals on Wednesday, July 27th followed by a luncheon with the judiciary.

The partnership allows students to witness court procedures firsthand and hear insight from judges and court personnel, explained Rachel Nader, CLA's Advocacy Director.

"By providing an in-depth look into the professional life of an attorney, students broaden their understanding of what to expect when moving from the classroom to the courtroom," Nader shared.

In addition to collaborative programming with local courts, CLA offers its summer associates the opportunity to draft pleadings, interview clients, analyze evidence, and attend and assist with actual court hearings during the 12-week program.

Students shared their feedback regarding their visit with the court, citing that the experience enlightened them to the variety of cases that come before the court and the expectations when presenting oral arguments.

"This experience gave me greater confidence to pursue appellate work, which is something I've always been interested in," shared Brandon Burkey, a summer associate that attends Case Western Reserve University's School of Law.

Kinsey Obinger, a student at Cleveland-Marshall School of Law, appreciated the judges taking time to answer questions. "It helped to see them as actual people," she explained.

More information about CLA's student programs can be found at www.communitylegalaid.org/students.