

LSBA, JTBF Conduct Inaugural Legal Internship Program for High School Students

The Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) partnered with the Just the Beginning Foundation (JTBF) this past summer to present the inaugural “Suit Up for the Future” High School Summer Legal Institute and Internship Program. Sixteen New Orleans area high school juniors and seniors were selected for the inaugural group and participated in the five-week program (June 20-July 25), which included lectures, field trips to New Orleans area courts and law schools, shadowing attorneys in area law firms, and mock oral arguments.

Week one programming included a series of lectures at the Louisiana Bar Center in New Orleans, presented by area judges, lawyers and law school professors. Topics included Torts, Legal Research and Writing, Contracts and Criminal Law, with several break-out sessions for individual questions and discussion. LSBA President Michael A. Patterson (2010-11) addressed the students on the first day of the program in June. LSBA President James J. Davidson III addressed



Sixteen New Orleans area high school juniors and seniors participated in the inaugural “Suit Up for the Future” High School Summer Legal Institute and Internship Program, jointly sponsored by the Louisiana State Bar Association and the Just the Beginning Foundation. Participating students are, front row, from left, Jeffrey Sturcke, Justin A. Dicharia, Erin A. Fernandez and Alindseya Franklin. Seated, Ashley Jones, LSBA intern and student at Loyola University College of Law. Participating students, standing, from left, Tiffany Lou, Keyerre Chattard, Marina J. Quave, Theresa Aubert, Brianna Skinner, William Brown, Gerald L. Carter, Jr., Kira Schuette, Roderick O. Clark, Ben Gothard and Alexis M. Doss. Not in photo, Brandy Wilson. Photo by Kelly McNeil Legier.

the students during the closing networking reception in July.

Programming for the next four weeks included discussions about ethics, field trips to the courts (including Orleans Parish Criminal District Court, Orleans Parish Civil District Court, Orleans Parish Municipal Court and the United States District Court, Eastern District of Louisiana), field trips to the Louisiana Supreme Court Museum, field trips to law schools, and shadowing at several area law firms, offices and courts.

The program ended on July 25 with mock oral arguments in the courtroom of Magistrate Judge Karen Wells Roby with the United States District Court, Eastern District of Louisiana.

“The Suit Up for the Future Program illuminates the path to the legal profession to

interested students and it helps to focus their efforts to achieve this goal as they prepare to graduate from high school and move on to college,” said Judge Roby, coordinator of the internship program and a member of both sponsoring organizations. “This program—the result of a partnership between the LSBA and the JTBF—is helping to achieve the mission of both organizations by creating a pipeline to a more diverse legal profession, ultimately creating a profession that mirrors the diverse nature of our society,” she added.

“The Suit Up Program gives the students positive educational exposure to the law and the legal profession that is not otherwise available,” said LSBA Diversity Committee Co-Chair Wayne J. Lee. “This is a chance to both enhance the image of the profession



Louisiana State Bar Association President James J. Davidson III addressed the students and guests during the closing networking reception for the inaugural “Suit Up for the Future” High School Summer Legal Institute and Internship Program. Photo by Kelly McNeil Legier.

and inspire students to become the future lawyers and judges who will advance the profession.”

Participating 11th graders were Theresa Aubert, Academy of the Sacred Heart; Roderick O. Clark, Martin Luther King High School; Alexis M. Doss, St. Mary’s Academy; Erin A. Fernandez, Thomas Jefferson Senior High School; Alindseya Franklin, Haynes Academy for Advanced Studies; Ben Gothard, Patrick F. Taylor Science and Technology; Tiffany Lou, Patrick F. Taylor Science and Technology; Jeffrey Sturcke, Patrick F. Taylor Science and Technology; and Brandy Wilson, Slidell High School.

Participating 12th graders were William Brown, Northshore High School; Gerald L. Carter, Jr., McDonogh 35 College Preparatory; Keyerre Chattard, Warren Easton Charter; Justin A. DiCharia, St. Paul’s School; Marina J. Quave, Benjamin Franklin High School; Kira Schuette, Haynes Academy for Advanced Studies; and Brianna Skinner, Warren Easton Charter.

At the close of the program, several of the students were recognized. Best oralist honors went to Alindseya Franklin and Justin A. DiCharia, with Kira Schuette earning an honorable mention. Best brief honors went to Tiffany Lou, with Ben Gothard placing second and Justin A. DiCharia earning an honorable mention.

Comments received from the students themselves indicate the success of the project.

“Out of all the years I have participated in programs throughout the state of Louisiana, this is the best I have seen yet. The Suit Up for the Future internship has changed my life. Not only did I make lifelong friends, but also I met some of the most successful attorneys in Louisiana, had a true taste of the everyday life of law, experienced the ins and outs of law school, and increased my knowledge, self-discipline and ardor in the fields of law and academics in general,” said Justin A. DiCharia, a 12th grader at St. Paul’s School.

Theresa Aubert, an 11th grader at Academy of the Sacred Heart, was equally as impressed. “I learned so much about what it takes to be a lawyer through this program. I will never forget my experiences travelling to court and shadowing at the different law firms, and

I will always remember the wonderful people I met. I came in with very little knowledge of law and ended knowing it is the right profession for me,” Aubert said.

“The LSBA Suit Up for the Future program taught me a lot about my strengths and weaknesses,” said Keyerre Chattard, a 12th grader at Warren Easton Charter. “It opened my eyes to new things and taught me never to give up. Without this program, I’ll be starting college blindsided.”

Alyndsia Franklin, an 11th grader at Haynes Academy for Advanced Studies, said, “This program is truly great. It will always have an impact on my life.”

Other students commented:

► “This program has really opened my eyes to the law profession and now I am seriously considering a career in law. I loved the program and hope others get to experience it. I’m thrilled I had the opportunity to be a part of the pilot group.”

► “I liked the many visits to courts and I loved the many connections that I received for later purposes. I most loved meeting the judges.”

► “When I initially came to the program, I knew nothing about the law. Now, I feel like I have a broad overview of the law. Through this program, I feel as if I have gained a general overview on how the law functions and operates. I got to meet many new people, make friends, and gain beneficial contacts. This was an amazing program and I am so glad I got to be a part of it.”

Participating in the “shadowing” portion of the program (whereby students were able to “shadow” employees during their daily duties) were the following employers: Adams and Reese, L.L.P.; Barrios, Kingsdorf & Casteix; Blue Williams, L.L.P.; Brown Sims, P.C.; Capital Post Conviction Project of Louisiana; Christovich & Kearney, L.L.P.; Entergy Services, Inc.; Gauthier, Houghtaling & Williams; Hon. Hebert Cade’s legal staff, Orleans Parish Civil District Court; Hon. Ivan L.R. Lemelle, United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana; Hon. Piper D. Griffin, Orleans Parish Civil District Court; Innocence Project of Louisiana; Irwin Fritchie Urquhart & Moore, L.L.C.; Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana; Law Office of Marion Floyd; Law Office of Clarence Roby Jr., A.P.L.C.; Leblanc Butler, L.L.C.; Liskow & Lewis, P.L.C.; Louisiana Capital



U.S. Magistrate Judge Karen Wells Roby addressed the students and guests during the closing networking reception for the inaugural “Suit Up for the Future” High School Summer Legal Institute and Internship Program. Judge Roby helped coordinate the program. Photo by Kelly McNeil Legier.

Assistance Center; Montgomery, Barnett, Brown, Read, Hammond & Mintz, L.L.P.; Porteous, Hainkel & Johnson, L.L.P.; Rodney & Etter, L.L.C.; Shorty, Dooley & Hall, L.L.C.; Southeast Louisiana Legal Services; Stone Pigman Walther Wittmann, L.L.C.; and United States Department of Housing & Urban Development.

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The Just the Beginning Foundation is a multi-racial, non-profit organization comprised of lawyers, judges and other citizens. The Foundation is dedicated to developing and nurturing interest in the law among young persons from various socio-economic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds under-represented in the legal profession and to supporting their continued advancement.

The Law School Admission Council (LSAC) is a nonprofit corporation that provides unique, state-of-the-art products and services to ease the admission process for law schools and their applicants worldwide. More than 200 law schools in the United States, Canada and Australia are members of the Council. All law schools approved by the American Bar Association are LSAC members.