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Mikéla Almeida's Post

Esther Clark Competition Held at R.I. Supreme Court

Posted by Mikéla Almeida on 11/24/2015 at 04:25 PM



The **Esther Clark Moot Court Competition** is an intra-school appellate advocacy competition for new Moot Court Board members.

Every fall brings an intense and engaging event – not only for the competitors and Board members, but also for the RWU Law administration, faculty, and legal community members who attend and participate in Esther Clark oral arguments. This year, fifteen competitors individually prepared an appellate brief and conducted oral arguments before panels of local attorneys and judges.

Because RWU Law has a wonderful and close-knit relationship with the Rhode Island legal community, Moot Court has additionally yielded unwavering support from the highest court in the state, the Rhode Island Supreme Court. Every year two competitors are fortunate enough to argue before Rhode Island's five Supreme Court justices in the finals. This year's finals took place in Providence on October 20, at the Rhode Island Supreme Court itself – where two well-deserving second-year law students, Katherine Berling and Lindsay Langella, argued a constitutional law issue.



Choosing an Esther Clark topic is always a topic of debate; a (dare I say) quasi-oral argument for the Moot Court Executive Board. We are often torn over finding a suitable topic that would not be too daunting for the participants and one that the justices may potentially see before them.

This year's topic was a great one – it asked whether, for purposes of establishing a §1983 civil rights claim in a First Amendment action, state law enforcement officers can lawfully instruct a citizen to cease recording an encounter with police and legally punish the dissemination of such an encounter, or whether such conduct violates the United States Constitution. It was a very close competition, according to all of the justices, but Katherine took the win.



Traditionally, the Esther Clark takes place at the RWU Law Appellate courtroom in Bristol, Rhode Island; however, this year the Court extended us the opportunity to head to Providence ... so choosing the RI Supreme Court as our venue was an absolute must! I think one of the reasons why this event is always a success is because it is a real courtroom with actual justices, at the most beautiful and meaningful courthouse in the state. This provides a realistic and engaging environment for the participants and the community. Not many law schools are able to claim that their students have the opportunity – every year – to argue before the state's highest court at the state's highest court! Moreover, every time the finals are held in Providence, it draws an amazing audience. This year the entire courtroom was filled to capacity, which necessitated an overflow room for additional spectators.



I would like to reiterate my gratitude to Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell and the Rhode Island Supreme Court justices. Without your unwavering support, this event would not be possible. So on behalf of the entire Moot Court Board, thank you all. This competition would also not be possible without the late Mr. John Clark and his continued support to this Competition, named to honor his wife, a deeply respected member of RWU Law's early faculty, Professor Esther Clark.

I would like to thank Professor Bruce Kogan for speaking at the finals about the amazing impact Professor Clark has had on the RWU Law community. Thanks also to Dean Yelnosky, Heather Bernier, Angie Cooper, Professor Goldstein, the RWU Law faculty, administration, judges, brief graders, students, and the RWU Law community for your continued support of Moot Court.

I'm very pleased with this year's competition and am still receiving positive feedback today. I look forward to watching Moot Court grow after I graduate – and I look forward to watching more Esther Clark finals at the Rhode Island Supreme Court.

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