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Dean Logan's Blog: RWU Law Students Have Unique Opportunities to Learn By Doing

Roger Williams University School of Law

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RWU Law Students Have Unique Opportunities to Learn By Doing

Posted by David Logan on 03/06/2013 at 11:53 AM

A trademark of a RWU Law education is the opportunity to work closely with leading lawyers and judges in a broad array of settings. Here are just two examples from this semester….

First, Sarah Bratko (’13):

“This picture was taken during the Judiciary Hearing on a bill to legalize gay marriage in the Rhode Island. The Judiciary Committee eventually approved the bill and on January 24, the House passed the bill.”

Governor Lincoln Chaffee testifies, Sarah is third from the right

“This was the second day of my public interest externship with the Speaker of the House of Representatives Gordon Fox and the Office of House Policy and it was an incredible opportunity! I am proud to witness this important step in this march towards equal rights for citizens of Rhode Island and I owe that experience to my externship and the incredible people working in the Speaker's Office.”

Next, Andrew Rogers (’14):

“Imagine you have just watched the beginning of a murder trial, with the defense attorney questioning jurors to expose their hidden biases. You experienced a compelling opening statement by the Attorney General laying out the theory of why this defendant is guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. Then you get to sit through the defendant’s response, and their theory of innocence. Next, the Attorney General is putting witnesses on the stand and laying out the State's evidence. But during the prosecution’s direct examination of the principal witness you
find yourself with a number of questions. Couldn’t this line of questioning be clearer? Why did the judge allow out of court statements that witness repeated to be heard by the jury? Aren’t they inadmissible hearsay? Why didn’t the defense attorney object to the leading questioning by the prosecution?”

“A year and half into my RWU education I found myself in his exact situation, as a lucky member of the Judicial Externship Program. After the morning was over I was left with all of these questions. I walked into the back of the courtroom and over to the lunchroom. The wonderful thing about the Kent County Courthouse is that on most days, the judges eat lunch together, and given the openness of the judges to externs, I was actually able to get the judges’ reactions to my observations.”

“The practical knowledge that I have gained will be invaluable in my quest to become an excellent attorney. Oh, and one thing I have learned: if you don’t object to some hearsay evidence, no one is going to bail you out and object for you, least of all the judge!”

Top Row From Left: Associate Justice Walter R. Stone, Law Clerk Lindsay Vick (RWU 2013), Associate Justice Bennett R. Gallo, Associate Justice Allen P. Rubine.

Bottom Row From Left: Michael De Cruz (2014), Andrew Rodgers (2014)