Administrative Office of the Courts

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Judicial Clerkship Program's summer externships underway

SANTA FE – Eight law students began summer externships this week as part of the Judicial Clerkship Program, an initiative that provides training, mentorship, and possible clerkships for those traditionally underrepresented in the legal profession.

The New Mexico Supreme Court, the State Bar of New Mexico Committee on Diversity in the Legal Profession, and the Young Lawyers Division jointly manage the Judicial Clerkship Program, now in its fourth year. The externships last 10 weeks.

"The Judicial Clerkship Program is a win – win situation for everyone," said Chief Justice David K. Thomson. "Students not only gain valuable experience by writing and doing research, they gain mentors and a pathway to work for the Judiciary in the future."

The main goal of the Judicial Clerkship Program is to train law students to become law clerks after graduating from law school. Law clerks within the New Mexico Judiciary typically work for a justice or a judge for one or two years. Law clerks write bench memos, which detail all of the issues within a case objectively, and spend time doing research for writing draft opinions. A written opinion is a formal explanation of a ruling of a case. It is widely acknowledged that judicial clerkships increase professional development of law school graduates and often lead to greater advancement in their career as a lawyer or in the judiciary.

Law students James Herndon, Dante Gurule, Hosanna Black, Jean-Fredric Belaise, Ezra Baldwin, Danielle Lopez, Rebecca Rusek-Myers, and Brianna Segay were selected to participate in the Judicial Clerkship Program last fall and most attended "Clerkship Boot Camp" in spring. "Clerkship Boot Camp" provides professional development such as practical guidance to writing effectively, interviews, professionalism and working in the Courts.

Hosanna Black is one of the first-year law students participating in the Judicial Clerkship Program. Going to law school years after graduating from college is something her sister suggested Hosanna do because she loved writing and doing research. "I'm excited about the

program," she said. "I was looking for an 'Act 2". I want to do something for myself that I enjoy." Hosanna said she would love to clerk after she graduates and wants to go into disability law. "I want to do public service in some way."

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2024 Judicial Clerkship Program kick-off at the New Mexico Supreme Court. Front Row from left to right: Allison Block-Chavez (Representing the New Mexico State Bar), Victoria Lovato (Law Clerk to Chief Justice Thomson), Judge Kristina Bogardus (Court of Appeals), Emmalee Johnston (Law Clerk to Judge Gerald E. Baca and Mentor to Externs), Elizabeth (Liz) Garcia (Chief Clerk of Court), Lysette Romero-Cordova (Chief Deputy Clerk of Court), Second Row: Annie Swift (Law Clerk to Judge Medina at Court of Appeals), Alyssa Segura (Supreme Court Rules Attorney), Hosanna Black (Extern with Justice Bacon), James (Jimmy) Herndon (Extern to Chief Justice Thomson), Dante Gurule (Extern for Justice Vargas), Rebecca Rusek-Myers (Extern to U.S. District Judge Matthew Garcia), Danielle Lopez (Extern to Judge Bogardus), Third Row: Elisa Cibils (Law Clerk to Justice Vargas), Deanna Warren (Law Clerk to Justice Bacon), Jean-Frederic Belaise (Extern to Justice Vargas), Brianna Segay (Extern to U.S. District Judge David Urias), Ezra Baldwin (Extern to Judge Medina), Alex Alvarado (Mentor), Back Row: Lionel Betsch (Law Clerk to Justice Bacon), Chief Justice David K. Thomson, Travis Murphy (Law Clerk to Chief Justice Thomson), Ricardo Guadarrama (Mentor), Jonah Chadwick-Griego (Law Clerk to Senior Justice Michael E. Vigil), Rhys Llewellyn (Law Clerk to Judge Bogardus), Jordan Velasquez (Mentor), and Lisa Enfield (Law Clerk to Justice Briana H. Zamora).