

Week Ten – We Did it and I Learned So Much Along the Way

Hannah Klonowski – Stetson University

We officially finished the Mock Trial! It feels so surreal to say that the event it feels like we've been working towards all summer is really over. The last few weeks have felt like an absolute whirlwind, but this past week in particular just flew by.

I have to say, it was definitely a challenge keeping up with regular assignments on top of Mock Trial preparation, but I learned more than I can say from the experience. Before starting this process, I had no idea how to introduce evidence, I didn't know how to impeach a witness, and I didn't even really know about trial procedure or how a trial actually progresses. To think about how much I learned over the course of only a few weeks of preparation is almost overwhelming, but I'm also so glad that I was able to learn these things that I simply haven't been taught in law school.

Of course, I never would have learned all of that without the help of my mentor associate Jonathan Marcelo and associate Reggie Guillaume. Reggie helped all of the summer associates learn how to introduce evidence, practiced objections with us, and even had us come up with direct and cross examinations on the fly to test our skills. Without Reggie's evidence boot camp, I probably would not have been able to get a single piece of evidence in. And Jonathan helped me throughout the process by listening to every single iteration of my opening, direct examination, and cross examination that I was possibly able to come up with. I appreciate both of them and their time so much.

I also feel so fortunate to have had such an awesome teammate in Ella. It was a really fulfilling experience to watch both of us improve so much over such a short period of time. Even just over the course of the day before the trial, when all of the Summer Associates met in the office on Sunday to prepare, I felt like our arguments and presentation improved immensely.

After the trial was over, all of the summer associates received feedback from the trial judges. I felt that they were very kind in their feedback, but also made sure to give us some useful criticisms so that we would all be able to improve in the future.

While I know that I made quite a few mistakes during the Mock Trial itself, I am proud of how much Ella and I were able to accomplish in such a limited amount of time. It was, overall, an awesome learning experience.