

2025 Courses

January 2025

2025 New Judges Seminar

The annual New Judges Seminar was held virtually and in-person over seven days in early January 2025. During the seminar, over 100 newly elected and appointed judges attended sessions designed to help them make the transition from practicing attorney to judge. The New Judges Seminars emphasize the teaching of skills unique to judging and include substantive and procedural law sessions geared to each court type.

The IFRAC System: Writing Trial Court Opinions Efficiently for Publication (Supreme Kings)

Thomas J.K. Smith, the State Reporter of New York, introduced and illustrated the IFRAC system for writing trial court opinions efficiently and concisely and explained how the New York State Law Reporting Bureau edits and publishes opinions.

2025 UCS Attorney Series: Judicial Opinion Writing, Part 1

The Judicial Opinion Writing program is designed to enhance participants' skills in crafting judicial opinions. The first part of this three-part program addresses: the importance of legal writing, the effect of COVID and AI on opinion writing, plain English, judicial writing style, the structure of judicial opinions, writing fair opinions, and the duties of court attorneys and law clerks.

JI Learning on Location Program: Fortnite, Fentanyl and Frappuccino: The Science of Addiction (Supreme Nassau)

Renowned neuroscientist, Dr. Stephen Dewey offers a captivating and comprehensive analysis of the process of addiction. Highlighting PET scan studies, Dr. Dewey shares science-based, objective evidence of how addiction impacts brain function, structure, and development from adolescence to adulthood. His research, focusing on the disease model of addiction, illustrates how drugs, other substances, and cause chemical and physiological changes in the brain, making it extremely difficult for addicts to stop using them without help. This presentation provides judges, attorneys, and court leaders with invaluable insights about the impact of addiction on family dynamics and how this knowledge can be utilized to make informed decisions regarding addiction-involved individuals who appear in the many types of cases pending in our courts.

February 2025

"Lemmon to Liberation": The Untold Power of Black Labor in Shaping America

On February 6, 2025, a distinguished panel, including the Hon. Rowan D. Wilson, Chief Judge of the New York State Court of Appeals; the Hon. Albert M. Rosenblatt, retired Associate Judge of the New York State Court of Appeals; Rev. Dr. Stephen W. Pogue, Senior Pastor, Greater AME Zion Church (Mount Vernon, NY); Rev. Dr. Malcolm J. Byrd, Senior Pastor, Mother AME Zion Church of Harlem; and Mirna Martinez Santiago, Esq. (Moderator),

analyzed the Lemmon Slave Case, discussing its historical and legal significance and the role of Black churches in the abolition movement.

The IFRAC System: Writing Trial Court Opinions Efficiently for Publication (presented at several courts)

Thomas J.K. Smith, the State Reporter of New York, introduced and illustrated the IFRAC system for writing trial court opinions efficiently and concisely and explained how the New York State Law Reporting Bureau edits and publishes opinions.

2025 UCS Attorney Series: Judicial Opinion Writing, Part 2

The Judicial Opinion Writing program is designed to enhance participants' skills in crafting judicial opinions. The second part of this three-part program addresses: the writing process, large and small-scale organizations, editing, ethics, concision and succinctness, and clarity.

The Role of the Young Lawyer in Being an Agent for Change

On February 28, 2025, a distinguished panel—including the Hon. Rowan D. Wilson, Chief Judge of the New York State Court of Appeals; the Hon. Adam Silvera, Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for the New York City Courts; and Dawne Mitchell, Esq., Chief Attorney of the Juvenile Rights Practice at The Legal Aid Society of New York City—discussed how young lawyers can be agents for change and how they have, throughout history, helped shape constitutional jurisprudence

and federal and state law. The panel also addressed how senior lawyers can mentor law students and young lawyers to foster a commitment to public service and incorporated the recent ABA Interpretation 303-5 of ABA Rule 303 into the discussion.

March 2025

[2025 Medicine for Judges Seminar](#)

The Judicial Institute hosted a two-day seminar on March 4-5, 2025, designed for judges who preside over cases involving medical professionals, such as medical malpractice, personal injury, and wrongful death. The seminar offered both procedural and substantive sessions, addressing a range of topics including recent updates to malpractice laws and the Medical Indemnity Fund, summary judgment issues (e.g., competing affirmations), expert witness disclosures (CPLR 3101[d]), and the complex legal and medical challenges involved in cases of failure to diagnose cancer. A distinguished group of jurists and attorneys served as the seminar's faculty.

[2025 UCS Attorney Series: Judicial Opinion Writing, Part 3](#)

The Judicial Opinion Writing program is designed to enhance participants' skills in crafting judicial opinions. The third and final part of the judicial opinion writing program addresses: legal-writing controversies, grammar, punctuation, citations, and practice examples and polling.

[Inclusive Language and Best Practices for Working with Transgender Court Users](#)

In this program, attendees reviewed common vocabulary and concepts related to gender and sexual orientation, explored the experiences of transgender court users, and learned best practices for ensuring an equitable court experience. The speaker also

addressed how court personnel can access, develop, and apply productive strategies and tools for compassionate and respectful interactions with court users.

[A Discussion of Family Court Issues: Perspectives from the Justices of the First Department](#)

In this program, which covered a variety of topics, including how to avoid reversals, Justices of the Appellate Division, First Department, provided practical tips on the most common errors made by Family Court and IDV Part judges in their rulings. They also answered questions about what they look for in these cases and encouraged participants to ask questions throughout the program.

[2025 UCS Attorney Series: Evidence Update: 2024 Decisions](#)

In this evidence update, the speaker reviewed and examined significant cases decided by New York's trial and appellate courts in 2024.

[International Family & Immigration Law Series for State Court Judges & Attorneys Module 1: International Movement of Children Part 1 - Registration and Enforcement of Foreign Orders](#)

In this program, presenters discussed what to do when a party files to register and enforce a custody order from another country. Panelists walked through the arguments that can be made against registration of a foreign custody order, the proceedings that follow, scheduling an enforcement hearing, and more. The panelists also discussed what to do if a party asks for immediate enforcement of the foreign order and possible intervening proceedings, such as what to do if a party files for temporary emergency relief.

[International Family & Immigration Law Series for State Court Judges & Attorneys Module 1: International Movement of Children Part 2 - International Child Abduction with no Legal Remedy](#)

Panelists in this program focused on the complicating factors that must be addressed in an order when a family has a connection to another country during a custody resolution proceeding. The program highlighted what judges should consider and include in their order to best prevent a parental child abduction, and child abductions where there is no legally viable path towards resolution.

April 2025

[A Holistic Approach to Child Support: Impacts, Insights and Strategies](#)

On April 2, 2025, Family Legal Care presented a program where they discussed the importance of child support as a poverty prevention tool and the intersection of child support on other family court cases like custody and welfare. Presenters shared stories of unrepresented litigants' experiences navigating the Family Court System and how child support impacts their lives. Family Legal Care was joined in this innovative discussion with Jumpstart for Dads and others, focusing on solutions and lessons learned in the field.