

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.

Opinion Writing for Publication Using the IFRAC Method

In this program, Thomas J.K. Smith, the State Reporter of New York, introduces and illustrates the IFRAC system for writing trial court opinions efficiently and concisely and explains how the New York State Law Reporting Bureau edits and publishes opinions.

International Family & Immigration Law Series for State Court Judges & Attorneys Module 1: International Movement of Children Part 3 - To Return or Not Return: The Hague Abduction Convention

When a parent claims their child is sitting in New York because of a parental child abduction, the case gets much more complicated, particularly if the party is self-represented and has not adequately plead a cause of action. Learn more about the Hague Abduction Convention, and what to do when the "custody" case before you takes a twist after an abduction allegation. Panelists will walk you through the law and the legal proceedings from start to finish in this international treaty case. They will provide practical tips on where to seek out assistance if this is your first Hague Abduction Convention case.

Holocaust Remembrance Program How Safe are we in a Constitutional Democracy? The Unimaginable Consequence of the Destruction of Judicial Independence

On April 30th, 2025, the Judicial Institute hosted a Holocaust Remembrance Program. The program featured a screening of a short film titled *Hitler's Court*.

Following the film, panelists discussed the unimaginable consequence of the destruction of judicial independence. The panelists also discussed morality, misinformation, the role of government, youth mobilization, and more.

May 2025

Jl Learning on Location Program: Fortnite, Fentanyl and Frappuccino: The Science of Addiction (Ninth Judicial District)

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.

Solutions for Girls in the Juvenile Justice System

Building on the success of last year's impactful event, *Black and Brown Girls and the Juvenile Justice System*, this program continued the conversation by exploring the unique challenges girls face within the justice system. The distinguished group of speakers took a deeper look at the lived experiences of these girls, the systemic injustices they encounter, and the innovative solutions being implemented to address them.

International Family & Immigration Law Series for State Court Judges & Attorneys Module 1: International Movement of Children Part 4 - International Relocation of Children

There are a host of legal and practical considerations when you are determining whether a child is permitted to relocate to another state or country with a parent. Separate from assessing the child's best interests, you also need to consider the disposition of the custody proceedings and the conflicts in New York's jurisdictional statute (the UCCJEA) and those jurisdictional statutes in other jurisdictions. The conflict could lead to a refusal to recognize your custody order, an inadvertent shift in jurisdiction to modify your order, or an outright void that allows a bad acting parent to circumvent your dictates. Learn more about the legal considerations you must contemplate when addressing a parent's request to relocate their child to another country or request to return a child to New York.

June 2025

Court of Appeals Update: A Review of Select Criminal Appeals (2023-2025 Terms)

This program examined significant criminal appeals decided by the New York State Court of Appeals during the 2023-2025 Terms.

2025 UCS Attorney Series Kinship Guardianship: An Insider's Perspective Practical Tips and Best Practice - So it Works Better for Families

Kinship Guardianship: An Insider's Perspective Practical Tips and Best Practice So it Works Better for Families offers judges and attorneys a candid, firsthand look at how kinship guardianship functions in

practice and where it often falls short. Led by attorneys who have navigated the system, this session explores common systemic barriers, highlights practical solutions, and shares best practices to help legal professionals make more informed, family-centered decisions. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of how to strengthen permanency outcomes and better support kinship caregivers within the legal framework.

Demystifying the Role of Family Court in the SIJS and Adoption-Based Family Petition Processes

What is a family courts involvement in SIJS immigration benefits? What are the required determinations that must be made under relevant state law regarding dependency or custody, parental reunification, and best interests? What are guardianship requirements for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status? Does a guardian have to have lawful immigration status? Can lawful permanent residents use family-based petition processes for adopted children or is it limited to US Citizens only? Is the family-based petition process available to children of any countries? What evidence does an adoptive parent petitioners have for purposes of immigration benefits for their adopted children? Learn more about family court orders and processes required for SIJS and family-based adoption immigration benefits.

June and July 2025

2025 Judicial Summer Seminars

The Judicial Summer Seminars convene judges from across the state to participate in engaging and forward-thinking educational programs. These seminars explore recent legal developments, emerging issues affecting the judiciary, and trends shaping the state's court system. Special emphasis is placed on challenges and issues unique to our state's courts.

July 2025

The Intersection of State Law Orders & Some of the Most Common Federal Immigration Benefits

What evidence is required for a victim of qualifying criminal activity to successfully petition for a U visa? What is a family courts role in U visa certifications? What evidence is required for a victim of trafficking to successfully petition for a T visa? What level of involvement with law enforcement and/or contributions to an investigation is required for U and T visa applicants to be eligible to apply for that status? How do orders of protection serve as evidence for certain U visa applicants and individuals self-petitioning under VAWA? Learn more about humanitarian-based immigration benefits that may rely on family court orders and processes.

Adverse Immigration Consequences to Family Court Orders and Findings

How can information sharing between New York State criminal, family or supreme courts and the immigration authorities trigger a range of impactful immigration consequences for the parties involved? What adverse immigration consequences may result from dispositions, rulings, and orders (particularly Orders of Protection) that are commonly issued in family court matters? When does fingerprinting lead to a potential adverse immigration consequence? How does a litigant's immigration status impact their family law case, particularly if they are detained? Specifically, how can detained parents or guardians participate in ongoing family court cases and arrange visitation with their children when detained?

September 2025

2025 Changes to New York's Discovery Law

This program examines the 2025 reforms to New York's criminal discovery laws, which are part of the

FY 2026 state budget. These reforms aim to streamline evidence disclosure requirements, prioritize timely, good faith compliance, and reduce case dismissals for minor procedural errors.

2025 UCS Attorney Series: Intro to ADR, Part 1

This program provides a comprehensive overview of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) within the New York State Unified Court System. Participants will explore essential ADR processes and techniques, along with an introduction to valuable local and statewide resources. The course covers the who, what, where, when, and why of ADR, offering insight into its historical development and practical applications. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of how ADR enhances the work of both judicial and nonjudicial court staff by promoting more holistic and effective dispute resolution.

Presidential Executive Orders in the Courtroom: What State Court Judges Need to Know

This panel will examine the legal foundations, scope, and limits of executive orders. Among other topics, the panelists will discuss how executive orders intersect with state law and affect courtroom proceedings.

Review & Discussion of Bail Legislation and Related Issues 2025: Part 1 - Bail in New York: Where are We Now?

This Program will review the statutes, standards and case law developments that have impacted bail-setting practices since the 2020 implementation of New York State Bail Act.

October 2025

International Family and Immigration Law Series: **Module 3: Family Formation: International Surrogacy**

This Program will explain the surrogacy process in New York and California and provide some insight into the current state of International Surrogacy. The presenters will also discuss how the Courts handle surrogacy matters, and the importance of uniform and efficient filings and court processes. Practitioners will provide insight into their best practices, and a Judge who has presided over thousands of surrogacy matters will share a view from the bench.

U.S. Supreme Court Update (2024-2025 Term)

This program provides an in-depth analysis of the U.S. Supreme Court's most significant decisions from the 2024–2025 Term, highlighting major legal shifts and emerging splits among the Justices. It examines how these rulings are reshaping key areas of constitutional law, from executive power to individual rights, and signaling new directions in the Court's jurisprudence.

The New York State Constitution: A Brief History and Recent Developments

This program explores the evolution of the New York Constitution, highlighting key historical milestones, the context behind major amendments, and ongoing debates that may shape the state Constitution's future. The speaker also discusses how the state's Constitution offers substantive civil rights protections above and beyond the federal Constitution.

Raising Children's Voices in Child Welfare: Ensuring Active Participation in Case Outcomes

Join us for Raising Children's Voices in Child Welfare: Ensuring Active

Participation in Case Outcomes. Our keynote speaker, Keisha Adeniyi-Dorsey, CEO and Principal Family Defender, K. Adeniyi Law and Chair of the American Bar Association's Commission on Youth and Family Justice, will open the discussion with her own lived experience in Foster Care as well as her experience representing parents in the system. Attorney Adeniyi-Dorsey's address will be followed by four panel discussions featuring children, parents, social service professionals, and members of the judiciary. Together, they will explore the importance of considering children's perspectives in child welfare decisions.

Why Asking about the dog matters: An Introduction to the Human-Animal Bond and the Link Between Animal Cruelty and Interpersonal Violence

This program will discuss the importance of the human-animal bond and the link between animal cruelty and interpersonal violence. It will call attention to statutory and other legal authority for remedies that take account of the full range of family dynamics and achieve better outcomes for families experiencing domestic violence.

November 2025

Adoption Across Borders: Key Considerations for the Bench and Bar

When a New York family seeks to grow by adopting a child residing in another country, there are a variety of factors that they need to consider, and, potentially, an international treaty. What is the Hague Adoption Convention and how does it work? What immigration implications must you consider? Whether you are an attorney assisting parents through intercountry adoption or a judge encountering adoption orders in your courtroom, this course will equip you with a foundational understanding of the process and legal underpinnings of intercountry adoptions.

Voices for Justice: Perspectives from Formerly Incarcerated Law Students and the Juvenile and Criminal Justice System

Hosted in collaboration with the Formerly Incarcerated Law Student Advocacy Association (FILSAA) of CUNY School of Law, this important program will center the voices and lived experiences of students who have navigated incarceration and now advocate for justice reform. Through dynamic and thought-provoking discussions, the participants will explore pathways from incarceration to legal education and examine the broader intersections of the juvenile and criminal justice systems.