



# The Advocate

## The Polestino Trial Advocacy Institute Bi-Annual Newsletter



Welcome to the Bi-Annual Alumni Newsletter. We here at PTAI appreciate the road that has been paved by our numerous alumni and alumni volunteers and want to give back to our growing alumni community. As part of that process, we will be instituting a bi-annual newsletter to keep our alumni updated about our successes and various events. The newsletter will highlight our external competitions, internal competitions, and any major events the organization puts on throughout the semester. As this newsletter grows, we look to add sections to it about you, the alumni. We want to keep all our alumni connected and updated as to any major career or life events you all may have throughout the year. As such, we have created the alumni chair position to begin an alumni outreach program to keep all of us at PTAI connected and involved with this organization that has taught us so much over our time here at St. John's Law.



## FALL 2017 EXTERNAL COMPETITIONS

Our externals division had an extremely successful Fall semester. Our Externals Director, Jillian Shartrand, spent hours developing these teams and as a result we had an excellent first semester.

First, our team of experienced 3Ls made up of Erin Mullins, Alexander Mangano, Christina Mavrikis, and Christina Brennan took home third place at the Queen's District Attorney's Office Mock Trial Competition. They were coached by alumni Joseph Calabrese and Michael Vicario. Then, for the second year in a row, we won the Quinnipiac University Criminal Justice Trial Advocacy Competition! The team was composed of 3Ls Matthew Trezza and Anthony Masciana and first time 2L competitors Sharlene Disla and Shannon Dempsey. Coaching them to victory were alumni veteran coaches Kaitlin McTague and Mike Maffei. Following that, our team of 3Ls Joshua Kim and Dana Kurtti and 2Ls Zachary Latos and Gabriella DeRosa made it to the quarterfinals at the GGU Mock Trial Competition in San Francisco. Coaching them through this new competition were alumni Erik Snipas and Brenna Strype. Finally, we came in second at the Buffalo-Niagara competition. The team was composed of four seasoned 3L's, Daniel Quinn, Mark Luccarelli, Jillian Shartrand, and Mia Piccininni, who beat out 30 other teams to claim second place. They were coached by alumni Brian Hughes and Kirk Sendlein. As always, we are very proud of all our externals members and the effort they put into these competitions.

Next semester, six teams look to bring home new hardware. We have a great group of students ready and hungry for more. It looks to be another great semester!

# 2017 Charles M. Sparacio Criminal Internal Competition



The Fall 2017 Charles M. Sparacio Criminal Internal Competition was a success! Allison Smalley planned the event for months and was able to get a lot of new faces involved in the competition. We had a total of 12 teams of St. John's Law students competing. The winning team was coached by two of our newest alumni, Joanna Matuza and Arielle Cummings. The team was made up of Max Bartell, Jamie Caponera, Kristen Tierney, and Elisabeth Constantino.

The students prepared for weeks with their alumni coaches to put on great cases and performances. During the competition, their preparation showed, they received excellent feedback and critiques from many of our alumni during the competition.

We owe a big thank you to all of the coaches and evaluators who came back to help our students learn the ins and outs of mock trial. For a lot of competitors, this was their first try at a mock trial competition and we were all very impressed with the student's performance.

If you or anyone you know is interested in coaching we would love to have you! You can reach out to our internals director, Allison Smalley at [Allison.Smalley15@stjohns.edu](mailto:Allison.Smalley15@stjohns.edu).

# Advocacy In the Spotlight



This year, PTAI welcomed Douglas Knight to talk to the organization. Mr. Knight runs the Alternative Sentencing program at the Queens County District Attorney's Office. He spoke to the students about the different types of programs and sentencing methods that are available to certain criminal offenders who meet specific criteria. The discussion centered on a different method of approaching criminal trials with an eye toward rehabilitation and coming to an understanding of the different and effective methods of alternative sentencing.

We are always looking for new and innovative speakers for multiple events throughout the year to help educate our members and the school on various aspects of trial advocacy. If you have a topic, idea, or would like to help us as a speaker, please let us know.

Our Special Events Director, Christina Mavrikis, can be contacted at [STJPTAIEvents@gmail.com](mailto:STJPTAIEvents@gmail.com).



This year, the law school unveiled the Center for Trial and Appellate Advocacy.

St. John's Law has a proud tradition of graduates serving the public as both state and federal prosecutors.

The formation of the Center for Trial and Appellate Advocacy will bring together students, faculty, alumni, and practitioners interested in the art and science of advocacy.

## Peter James Johnson '49 Memorial National Civil Rights Trial Competition

This year PTAI hosted 16 schools from across the nation at our annual Peter James Johnson '49 Memorial National Civil Rights Competition.

The competing schools came from as close as Long Island to as far as Louisiana. Our special events director, Christina Mavrikis put together a wonderfully run competition where rounds were held at both the Nassau County Supreme Court and the law school. Teams put forth cases pursuant to a fact pattern that was loosely based on the Flint Michigan water crisis. The fact pattern was once again excellently written by alumni Alex Gilbert. This year Louisiana State University took home first place, while Suffolk Law School came away with second.

We look forward to continuing this great competition again next year!



# Polestino Trial Advocacy Institute

## ALUMNI OPPORTUNITIES

Over the course of the last semester, one of our goals as an E-Board was to establish a solid Alumni network. We have begun to develop an alumni data base and have created a new position for the board. Currently, Erin Mullins is our Alumni Chair. She has been working tirelessly to develop new ways of reaching out to you and extending our alumni data base.

As such we have quite a few opportunities coming up for our alumni! We have two internal competitions scheduled for this upcoming semester. They will both be held in March and we are always looking for help with coaching our internals division. Coaches and evaluators have the opportunity to earn CLE credits. We are always looking for new coaches and evaluators for each round. Both these volunteer opportunities give the alumni the chance to teach and connect with students that are very eager to learn. Our main goal is for the students to hear from experienced attorneys and get excellent feedback from our alumni community. For any information on coaching, evaluating or helping mentor a team, please contact [Allison.Smalley15@stjohns.edu](mailto:Allison.Smalley15@stjohns.edu) for all Internals matters.

Lastly, we are looking to broaden our alumni communications. Our first step is this newsletter. We'd like to add sections that are specifically about you all! We want to connect with you and hope to keep you all connected with each other. As we begin to compile next semester's newsletter, we ask that you email our Alumni Chair, Erin Mullins, at [stjptaialumni@gmail.com](mailto:stjptaialumni@gmail.com) with any updates you'd like to share with the community or any suggestions you have for us concerning this newsletter.



**ST. JOHN'S**  
**UNIVERSITY**  
**SCHOOL OF LAW**

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**Faculty Advisor**  
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As an eboard, we began this year with an eye towards the future. We wanted to continue PTAI's great success and to help the program grow. This year has been special for the board. As 3Ls we have been part of this organization for the last two years and have grown to love every moment of it. From crafting teams, to competing, to volunteer work, to budgeting, and even the arguments we've had as a board, we've grown to love it all. Each and every moment we've had has made us better advocates and closer friends over the years. It's something none of us would ever give up and it's an unforgettable experience for all of us.

Over the last years, PTAI has made great strides with competitions and effectively teaching students trial advocacy. From the new PTAI Trial Advocacy class for 2Ls to the hours spent practicing and refining our skills, each member of PTAI has grown immensely since they began their law school career. Much of what we've been able to do is in large part due to our alumni and the time you take to help us on various events.

So on behalf of the board, I would like to take the time to thank you all for your help this semester. In many ways you have all had a continued presence with this organization and it is felt in more ways than one. Some of you have helped coach or judge our internal competition, others have joined us as external coaches, and others have lent helping hands throughout the year with various projects the organization has worked on. Your assistance does not go unnoticed and is greatly appreciated.

As this newsletter has stated, we are looking to grow our alumni network. The board and I feel that a growing and healthy alumni network will open doors for many of our students to have mentors and opportunities that can help them as they move along with their careers. As such, I hope that you have enjoyed our first newsletter and we look forward to feedback and hearing from you all as we prepare for the upcoming semester.

Thank you,

Daniel Quinn