



MELINDA KATZ
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

QUEENS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
125-01 QUEENS BOULEVARD
KEW GARDENS, NEW YORK 11415-1568



718.286.6000
WWW.QUEENSDA.ORG

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17, 2020

CONTACT: PRESS (718) 286-6315
QDACommunications@queensda.org

**QUEENS DISTRICT ATTORNEY MELINDA KATZ HOSTS
BRAVE JUSTICE: INAUGURAL SUMMER INTERNSHIP FOR STUDENTS**

*Program Welcomes 54 Law Students and 12 College Students;
Paid Internship Will Practice Social Distancing With Hybrid Schedule*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today the start of her inaugural summer internship program titled Brave Justice. The internship kicked off this week with the students being welcomed to the Office by the DA and Chief Assistant District Attorney Jennifer Naiburg, via video conference.

District Attorney Katz said, "We are very excited to have these aspiring lawyers join us for a summer of experiential learning. Sadly, due to the on-going coronavirus pandemic many students across the country lost out on important internship opportunities. Not only are we going forward with an engaging program, we are also paying our interns. We are living through an extraordinary time and we know this summer internship will be an enriching experience for the participants that will both inform and inspire."

Our Brave Justice Legal Summer Internship Program will provide the students with a front row seat to learn how a bold and transitioning prosecutor's office operates. This inaugural summer of 2020 class – the most diverse group of students in the history of the Queens District Attorney's Office – was carefully selected to reflect the "World's Borough." The students represent 15 different law schools and 11 colleges. Many of them are bilingual, speaking Spanish, Mandarin, Urdu, Farsi, German, Haitian Creole, French, Serbian, Bosnian/Serbo-Croatian and Russian.

The District Attorney added that many of the interns hail from our local Queens neighborhoods or come from as far away as California. Some have current international roots in China, Colombia, and Serbia. This inaugural class is comprised of strong academic achievers, who have demonstrated a commitment to community and public service. Many were interested in DA Katz's progressive ideas to make this prosecutor's office more in line with the world we live in today.

While many summer opportunities downsized or shut down altogether due to the uncertainties related to the pandemic, DA Katz stood firm in her resolve to move forward with the Brave Justice Summer Legal Internship Program. In the last few weeks the pool of intern

applicants grew as the start date approached, making the selection process even more competitive.

To meet their learning needs and provide the interns with a stimulating yet safe summer program, the District Attorney's Director of Legal Hiring Mariela Palomino Herring developed a 6-week-long hybrid schedule. This innovative approach combines in-person intern interactions along with teleworking.

In addition to individual bureau assignments, interns will also receive daily presentations featuring veteran prosecutors, members of the judiciary; defense attorneys, the New York City Department of Correction and an inside look at a treatment provider. The training will also provide weekly, focused and intensive instruction on Constitutional issues involved in suppression hearings, along with a practical session on actually conducting a hearing. Their summer experience will culminate in mock suppression hearings where they will apply what they have learned during their internship.

A re-engineering of what used to be a simpler summer internship format was required in order to implement a hybrid program and create a safe and meaningful internship experience. The in-person component is minimal and carefully supervised to maintain the highest safety standards for the intern and office staff. Safe and socially distant work spaces had to be created and designed. Technology had to be developed and modified to allow law students remote access to assignments. Lectures and training exercises were reconfigured to virtual presentations via Webex video conferencing.

The arduous steps it took to initiate DA Katz's Brave Justice Summer Legal Internship Program was well worth the effort. Every summer, law students and college students flock to the district attorneys' offices to learn more about the criminal Justice system and to see if they want to play a future role in the administration of justice. This year more than ever, we need these forward-looking, community-connected and "aware" students to be inspired to become the next-gen prosecutors.

##