MY INTERNSHIP
Nassau County Family Court
Westbury, NY
Andrea Acosta
NASSAU COUNTY FAMILY COURT
My internship started in the very last days of May, and I was fortunate enough to get settled in quickly.

The view in the previous picture was the view I had at least 3 times a week in the mornings.

I interned with one of the judges in family court, Judge Robin Kent.
JUDGE ROBIN M. KENT
JUDGE ROBIN M. KENT

- Judge Kent ended up being one of the strongest women I’ve met.
- She has been a judge at Family Court since 2009, after she was elected.
- Before she was a judge, she worked at the NYS Department of Education and for Children’s Services in the City of New York.
JUDGE ROBIN M. KENT

- Judge Kent allowed me and her other interns to get a very personal view of what her job entailed.
- We watched her proceedings after we had discussed what cases were on the agenda.
- The decisions she faced were always difficult. Within the first two weeks, I gained an entirely different perspective of life in the courtroom.
- She was extremely helpful and answered any question I came up with (which was a lot!).
JEFFREY CARPENTER, ESQ.
I also worked closely with Jeffrey Carpenter, the Court Attorney.

I would sit in on his conferences and occasionally pore over the details of cases with him so that I might be able to contribute anything to a decision or settlement made in a case.
THE PROGRAM

- My internship was actually part of a larger internship program that encompassed various courts throughout Nassau County.
- There were around 65 interns, most of whom were law school students.
- As part of the program, we had various lectures every Wednesday, along with informative trips to different places.
The lectures ranged from info sessions about certain areas of law, to advice about how to take the bar exam and how to get employment as a young lawyer.

One of the things that impressed me most about the lectures was the camaraderie displayed between the lawyers themselves.
The lectures were usually given by lawyers who worked in the fields.

For example, we had an entire lecture about district court actions, given by both judges and lawyers who work in District Court.

We had lawyers with lengthy careers talk about why they do what they do, and the passion displayed by some was an interesting contrast to the passive attitude displayed by others, some of whom said they came across the opportunity and just went for it.
Because so many of the interns were law students, many lectures touched on what it was like to be a young lawyer.

I was impressed at what seemed to be a very real community comprised by the Nassau County Bar Association.

Hearing the Young Lawyer’s Committee from the NCBA was insightful, and definitely encouraged me to join the local Bar Association upon getting to law school.
TRIPS

- The trips were meant to introduce the interns to the other aspects of the justice system in Nassau County.

- As part of the program, we went to the Nassau County Medical Examiner’s Office, the Nassau County Correctional Facility, the Police Headquarters, and the Juvenile Delinquent facility.
NASSAU COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER
The trip to the Medical Examiner’s office was by far my favorite trip.

We had the amazing experience of learning about what happens at the Medical Examiner’s, what kind of cases they handle, and their interactions with law enforcement and the courts.

We were also supposed to see an autopsy, but (un)fortunately, there were no dead bodies to be autopsied that day.
We did, however, get the chance to see an autopsied body from the day before. The medical examiner explained how an autopsy worked, outlined the scar that ran through the deceased’s chest, and even showed the incision made to open the skull.

One shining moment from this trip was when the medical examiner insisted that her office doesn’t make assumptions about cause of death, but if they “see a hole in someone’s head, [they] know it wasn’t a train of thought!”
TOWARDS THE END
The last picture is of Judge Kent, Mr. Carpenter, Deirdre Esposito (Judge Kent’s legal secretary), Sundas Amer (CC ’15), Ryan Koleda and myself. This was after the internship ended, and right before school started.

We had a very nice lunch together and got to reflect a bit on the past summer, as we all got very close.

One of the things that struck me from this summer the most was the toll that it took on me emotionally.
The first two weeks were emotionally exhausting, because the impact of the Judge’s decision could and usually do affect someone’s entire life. That kind of responsibility should not be and is not taken lightly.

After a while, I took a page out of Judge Kent’s handbook and was able to balance my emotions with my rationality.

Still, the cases often hit close to home, and I can’t help but think that the fact that Nassau County is my home had a lot to do with it.
Overall, this internship program was a great experience. I learned many things about how a judge should conduct herself, about how lawyers should conduct themselves in the courtroom, the general hierarchy of a courtroom, as well as how the facts in a case are presented and what makes a case strong instead of weak.

This has definitely solidified my plans to go to law school, and I am registered to take the LSAT in December!