

# SARATOGA TOWN COURT

## Internship Program Overview

This one semester internship program is designed to familiarize the interns with the daily operation of a justice court. Town courts have primary jurisdiction over traffic cases, non-felony criminal matters, small claims, and several other matters that are not normally handled in the county courts, family courts, or other specialized courts. This court also supports Youth Court which usually convenes once a month.

Our intern program started with one college intern in the fall of 2004. It has greatly expanded and now accepts students from eleven high schools, seven colleges, and a law school. We also have a court security program with interns from a vocational school which is a completely separate program that is not addressed in this packet. By the end of 2009, 63 interns will have completed the program.

The Saratoga Town Court strongly supports the team concept. All officials of the court which includes the judges, court clerks, clerks, and the uniform court officer operate as a team to efficiently and fairly administer justice within our jurisdiction. Each team member has specific duties and responsibilities. The intern is expected to perform as a member of this team rather than as an observer. Much of the intern's learning is "hands on" to reinforce the assigned readings and their observations. The duties assigned to the intern rotate and are dependent on the program week and the intern's level of proficiency. The senior court clerk normally supervises the interns.

Although not always feasible, the goal is to have one high school intern, one college intern, and one intern from Albany Law School with one additional intern (total of 4) at all times throughout the year. The law school intern will often instruct the high school and college interns in legal procedures and document preparation. Each intern will have rotating assignments with each of the court personnel. As the interns become more proficient, additional duties will be assigned and their areas of responsibilities will be expanded. Each intern has an opportunity to participate in a research project and submit the results for publication to one of several judicial, local government, or law enforcement magazines. Several of the intern project research findings have been published.

Since the intern will be working with actual case files and be in contact with defendants in civil and criminal cases, the intern must understand that strict confidentiality is the policy of the court and no matters before the court may be discussed with anyone other than officials of the court. Any violation of this policy is grounds for immediate dismissal from the internship program.

The work schedule for each intern will be agreed upon by the intern, the school, and the court. The intern is expected to report promptly as scheduled and adhere to the court dress code as well as the other specified standards of conduct.

The intern's performance will be evaluated on a regular basis by a court official as appropriate depending on the tasks assigned. At the end of the internship, a written evaluation will be issued by a judge. The designated representative of the intern's school will be contacted at approximately mid program and at the end of the internship to discuss the performance of the intern.