

California Supreme Court Historical Society

Selma Moidel Smith Student Writing Competition California Legal History

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS FOR 2024

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We encourage all those working on California legal history (NOT just the history of California courts) to apply. Papers may include elements of digital humanities and may also be co-authored. This is a GREAT WAY to get attention for your hard work!

\$5,000 first-place, \$2,500 second-place, and \$1,000 third-place prizes will be awarded to the best papers on California state or colonial history, broadly considered. Recent winners include a study of the death penalty in California, the evolution of California land law, especially the movement from “free” to “cheap” land, law governing the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, and the origins of the University of California, as well as a jointly authored paper on Chinese adoption practices and their role in immigration decisions after the Chinese Exclusion Act.

We generally encourage papers of at least 7,500 and no more than 15,000 words, including notes and other explanatory matter. The competition is open to students and recent graduates in history and/or law, provided that they did not have full-time academic employment at the time the paper was written. The paper should also be unpublished, and all prize winners will receive an offer to publish in *California Legal History*, CSCHS’s journal. (Please see the most recent issue of the journal containing the three winning student articles of 2023 below.*)

Papers may be self-nominated or sent in by a professor or supervisor. To ensure anonymity, the author’s name should appear only on a separate cover page, along with the author’s mailing address, telephone number, email address, and the name of their school.

Submissions are due by June 1, 2024 and should be sent to director@cschs.org with the subject line “Smith Prize.” The winners will be announced in early July 2024, and an award ceremony (likely over Zoom) will be held in August 2024.

For the Prize Committee: Professor Sarah Barringer Gordon, Professor Laura Kalman

**California Legal History*, volume 18 2023, <https://www.cschs.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Legal-Hist.-v.18.pdf>; 2023 student writing competition winners’ articles begin at p. 189.

Introduction to CSCHS and its publications, including California Legal History:

The Hon. Daniel M. Kolkey, a former member of the California Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District, State of California, <https://www.courts.ca.gov/2840.htm>, is president of the California Supreme Court Historical Society (CSCHS). His three-year tenure is underway. Here is the general link to CSCHS: <https://www.cschs.org>.

The Hon. George Nicholson, also a former member of the California Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District, also serves on the CSCHS board. Justice Kolkey invited him to be editor-in-chief of the journal of *California Legal History* (CLH). And he agreed, <https://www.courts.ca.gov/2646.htm>.

Each issue of the *CLH* journal is anticipated to contain roughly 3550-450 pages of largely law-journal-form, in conformity with either *Blue Book* or *California Style Manual*, published in hard-copy and digital form, <https://www.cschs.org/publications/california-legal-history>.

CSCHS also has another history-related publication, the *CSCHS Review*. It is more of a magazine-type publication, containing no more than 50 pages of shorter stories, in hard-copy and digital forms, <https://www.cschs.org/publications/cschs-review>.

Justice Kolkey explains, “Why is there a California Supreme Court Historical Society,” Los Angeles/San Francisco Daily Journal (January 24, 2023), <https://www.dailyjournal.com/articles/370645-why-is-there-a-california-supreme-court-historical-society>. He there suggests the importance of preserving our legal history because “the historical underpinnings of a law, decision, or custom is critical to its proper application, whether in making an argument or in supporting a judicial ruling. In short, in the field of law, the past guides the future.”