

The Historical Society of the New York Courts
2015 David A. Garfinkel Essay Scholarship

THE ROAD TO EQUALITY

How have the New York Courts addressed equal human rights for the LGBT Community?

The New York courts and State Legislature have frequently been at the center of the debate over the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals. In this role they have taken many actions to consider the rights of this community, in particular in the areas of: Family, Employment and Criminal Law. The 2015 David A. Garfinkel Essay Contest asks the question of how the courts and legislature have addressed these rights and what the impact of these actions have been.

Selecting from one of the four topics below and discuss the role and impact of significant cases and legislation on the LGBT community. Your analysis should draw on events leading to these cases & laws, who (activists, attorneys and judges) was involved, and how the issues were addressed. You may discuss current and historical events.

1. **Family Law:** How has the law addressed LGBT families? Your essay can cover issues including, but not limited to: civil unions & marriage, adoption, spousal benefits and inheritance.
2. **Education Law:** Discuss anti-discrimination statutes and case law that concern LGBT students on campus.
3. **Employment Law:** What types of discrimination have LGBT individuals faced in the workplace and how have rights in this sphere evolved?
4. **Criminal Law:** Examine events of your choice in the evolution of New York's criminal law that impacted LGBT individuals from the Stonewall Rebellion (1969) to the present. This can include the development of hate crimes legislation.

(See questions on the Society's website at the [Garfinkel Contest Homepage](#))

CONTEST DEADLINE APRIL 1, 2015
ESSAYS ACCEPTED STARTING DECEMBER 1, 2014

Prizes and Awards

In recognition of New York's two great Community College systems, the CUNY Community Colleges and the SUNY Community Colleges, *The Historical Society of the New York Courts* has established prizes named in their honor.

All essays submitted will be reviewed by our judges to determine the best overall essay, and the student with the winning essay will be awarded *The David A. Garfinkel New York State Community College Grand Prize*. The best essay submitted by a student attending a CUNY Community College will be awarded *The David A. Garfinkel CUNY Community College Prize*. The best essay submitted by a student attending a SUNY Community College will be awarded *The David A. Garfinkel SUNY Community College Prize*.

NYS Community College Grand Prize: \$1,500
CUNY Community College Prize: \$1,000
SUNY Community College Prize: \$1,000

The winners will be honored at the Law Day ceremony at Court of Appeals Hall in Albany, an event at which the Chief Judge of the State of New York presides and State dignitaries attend. Following the ceremony, *The Historical Society of the New York Courts* will host a luncheon for the prize winners and their families. The professors who mentor the prize winners and their college presidents will also be invited to attend the Law Day ceremony and luncheon. The prize-winning essays will be published on our website.

Honorable Mention

The name of each student receiving *Honorable Mention* awards will be included in an Honor Roll on our website.

Resources

To assist you in your research for your essay, The Historical Society of the New York Courts has set up a website with useful links. To access the website, please click [here](#).

Requirements

- The writer must be a student pursuing a degree at a Community College within the SUNY or CUNY systems and registered at the college during the Fall semester of 2013 or the Spring semester of 2014
- The essay must be an original work of scholarship
- The essay must be at least 1,500 words in length and should not exceed 5,500 words; written in English, double-spaced, and formatted for 8-1/2" by 11" paper. **Neither the essay nor the title page may contain any identifying information** (i.e. do not include your name, your professor's name or the name of the school)
- The essay must be sent by e-mail attachment (PDF, Word or WordPerfect) to: history@nycourts.gov. **Include in the body of the email the following: (1) your name, (2) phone number, (3) home address, (4) the name of the college you attend and (5) the name of your professor**

Judging the Competition

A panel of members of the New York Bench and Bar will select the winning essays. Essays will be judged on:
Understanding of the subject
Effective presentation of a point of view
Good literary style and technique

The Historical Society of the New York Courts is an education corporation chartered by the Board of Regents of The University of the State of New York.