



SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

**SIMMONS  
LAW SCHOOL**

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## Welcome from Dean Brenner Johnson



Dear Law Alumni,

I am thrilled to have joined Southern Illinois University Simmons Law School as the new Dean. It is truly an honor to be a part of a community with such a strong history of academic excellence, professional achievement, and deep commitment to educating practice-ready lawyers. On a personal note, my husband Mark and I are getting settled

in Carbondale and could not be happier to be back in our home state of Illinois. I write today to begin what I hope will become an ongoing and sustained conversation with SIU alumni. I am also excited to share below some of the exciting happenings at the law school this summer.

While our students have been busy gaining practical legal experience this summer outside the classroom in their internships and law clerk positions, the law school has worked in different ways in our regional communities. Our Juvenile Justice Clinic and Civil Practice/Elder Law Clinic continued to provide legal services, and the Simmons Law also hosted two summer programs designed to create pathways for high school and college students to explore law school and the legal profession.

Next week, we will be back in the classroom and will welcome the Class of 2028, who will be our largest class of law students in many

years. I look forward to sharing more information about our students, new faculty, and plans for the fall semester in a few weeks!

If I have learned anything from my short tenure in this role, it is that our alumni are an essential part of who we are. As I travel throughout the region and across the country over the coming year, I look forward to meeting you, learning about your law school story, and deepening the connection between our school and the broader legal community.

Warmly,

Hannah

Dean and Professor of Law



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## Summer at Simmons Law School



In June, Simmons Law School and the SIUE Forensics Department, both recognized for their innovative and experiential learning programs, co-hosted the “Crime Scene to Courtroom” Camp. Held on the Belleville campus, the camp welcomed thirty-six high school participants, grades 10-12, from the Metro East area. This groundbreaking program explored the intersection of two rapidly expanding fields—law and forensic science—and was designed to introduce students to potential career pathways in both.



In July, Simmons Law School hosted its second summer program, Pipeline to Practice. In its third year, Pipeline to Practice, is designed for college students interested in pursuing a legal career. Fourteen students participated in a variety of immersive experiences, including a mock law school class, observation of a murder sentencing hearing in Jackson County, Illinois, and attendance at an immigration hearing at the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Illinois.

The program began on campus and continued with court visits where students had the opportunity to meet with judges and legal professionals, gaining real-world insights into the legal system. Pipeline to Practice reflects Simmons Law School's commitment to fostering a more inclusive and accessible legal profession, especially in communities across Southern Illinois and surrounding regions that face attorney shortages and justice gaps.

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