



2018 STUDENT WRITING COMPETITION WINNER ANNOUNCED

Winning author Alexandra Havrylyshyn (CENTER) is congratulated by Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye (CENTER LEFT), Justice Kathryn Mickle Werdegar (LEFT), who recently retired from the Court but remains on the Society's Board of Directors, Society President George Abele (RIGHT), and Selma Moidel Smith (CENTER RIGHT), who initiated and conducts the competition — on September 13, 2018.

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THE CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT HISTORICAL SOCIETY is pleased to announce the results of its 2018 Selma Moidel Smith Law Student Writing Competition in California Legal History.

The winner is Alexandra Havrylyshyn, who received her J.D. and a Ph.D. in Jurisprudence and Social Policy in 2018 from the UC Berkeley School of Law, where she is now a Robbins Postdoctoral Research Fellow.

Havrylyshyn receives a prize of \$2,500 and publication in the 2019 volume of the Society's annual scholarly journal, *California Legal History*. Second and third place winners were not selected this year.

Her winning paper is titled "How a California Settler Unsettled the Proslavery Legislature of Antebellum Louisiana." It is also a chapter of her doctoral dissertation which she is revising into a book, tentatively titled, *Free for a Moment in France: How Enslaved Women and Girls Claimed Liberty in New Orleans (1835–1857)*.

"How a California Settler Unsettled the Proslavery Legislature of Antebellum Louisiana" uncovers the little-known history of Judge John McHenry. During his time on the bench in Louisiana, McHenry interpreted pro-

slavery laws so as to favor liberty for certain enslaved individuals. Relying on McHenry's personal and legal papers (preserved at the University of California, Berkeley's Bancroft Library), this article argues that a commitment to the rule of law, rather than a clear commitment to ending slavery, ultimately explains McHenry's unpopular opinions. In a context of heightened sectional tension over the legality of slavery, McHenry departed Louisiana for California, where he was called upon to help frame the state's first constitution. At UC Berkeley, Havrylyshyn is currently teaching a class for undergraduate freshmen students on the topic of "Race, Gender, and Property Law."

The Society's annual competition is open to all law students. Papers must be written during law school enrollment and may address any aspect of legal history dealing significantly with California, ranging from the justices and decisions of the Supreme Court itself to local events of legal and historical importance, at any time from 1846 to the present. The students' papers are judged by a panel of legal historians and law professors. The deadline for the next competition is June 30, 2019. ★