



## 2022 WRITING COMPETITION VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE

*Virtual Roundtable Participants* — Top row, left to right: Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye, recently retired Justice Kathryn Mickle Werdegar, Competition Chair Selma Moidel Smith, and Society President Daniel Kolkey. Bottom row, left to right: Winning authors Leah Haberman, Ryan Carter, and Simon Ruhland. (Published in the San Francisco and Los Angeles editions of the Daily Journal on September 6, 2022.)

THE CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT HISTORICAL SOCIETY is pleased to announce the winners of its 2022 CSCHS Selma Moidel Smith Student Writing Competition in California Legal History.

First place was won by Leah Haberman of Columbia Law School (JD Candidate, class of 2024) for “More Than Moratoriums: The Obstacles to Abolishing California’s Death Penalty.” She concludes that only a change of public opinion, rather than legal or judicial action, is likely to end the death penalty in California. She receives a prize of \$2,500.

Second place was awarded to Ryan Carter, UCLA School of Law (MLS, Master of Legal Studies, with specialization in Public Interest Law & Policy, 2022), for “San Fernando Valley Secession: How a Quest to Change the Law Almost Broke L.A. Apart (and Whether It Still Could).” His paper traces the social and political forces that attempted to change state laws on city formation to favor or oppose secession. He receives a prize of \$500.

The third-place winner was Simon Ruhland, UCLA School of Law (LLM, Master of Laws, with specialization in International and Comparative Law, 2022), for “Wind

of (Constitutional) Change: Amendment Clauses in the Federal and State Constitutions.” He argues that the difficulty of amending the U.S. Constitution has caused it to become less reflective of major societal changes than the constitutions of states such as California. He receives a prize of \$250.

The distinguished judges were Professors Lawrence Friedman of Stanford Law School and Rebecca Latham Brown of USC Gould School of Law.

The high quality of the winning papers has resulted in the editorial decision to publish all three in the 2022 volume of *California Legal History*. Professor Brown commented that Haberman’s paper was “the most historical, with a focus on an important legal issue in California”; that she “liked the original historical research (interviews and archives)” in Carter’s paper; and that Ruhland’s paper might well have placed higher if it had been “centrally about California,” as “it seemed to be at a level of scholarship that I would not expect from a student.”

The competition is open to all law and graduate students, and papers may address any aspect of legal history dealing significantly with California. ★