

Selma Moidel Smith Student Writing Competition: Call for Papers Addressing California Legal History



Maquette for *The Commonwealth* (1924), by Arthur F. Mathews, as it appears on the fifth floor of the California Supreme Court's headquarters in San Francisco. (Santa Barbara Museum of Modern Art, Gift of Harold Wagner.)

The California Supreme Court Historical Society (CSCHS) invites all students (and recent graduates) interested in, or working in the area of California legal history (not just the history of California courts) to compete in its annual nationwide student writing competition. Papers may include elements of digital humanities and may also be co-authored. This is a GREAT WAY to gain wider attention for your hard work!

Prizes of \$5,000 for 1st place, \$2,500 for 2nd, and \$1,000 for 3rd will be awarded to the best papers addressing California history, broadly considered. Recent winners include a study of the death penalty in California, the evolution of California land law, the history of desegregation at Stanford Law School, disability law and the campaign for independent living, and a jointly authored paper on Chinese adoption practices and their role in immigration decisions after the Chinese Exclusion Act.

Papers should be at least 7,500 and preferably not more than 12,000 words, including footnotes and other explanatory matter. The competition is open to students and recent graduates in history and/or law, provided that the author(s) did not have full-time academic employment when the paper was written. Submissions also must not have been published or accepted for publication elsewhere, and the author is responsible for obtaining permission for any photographs/illustrations, which must be captioned. Winners will likely receive an offer to publish in *California Legal History*, CSCHS's annual journal, assuming compliance with our publication's editorial and technical standards.

Papers may be self-nominated or submitted 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 the affiliated school.

Submissions are due by **July 1, 2025** and should be sent as a Word document to director@cschs.org with the subject line "Smith Prize." Winners will be announced in July 2025. An award ceremony, which in the past has been presided over by the Chief Justice of California, will be held in August or September, likely over Zoom.

Sincerely, the Prize Committee: Professors Laura Kalman (UCSB), Sarah Barringer Gordon (University of Pennsylvania) & Stuart Banner (UCLA).

CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT HISTORICAL SOCIETY