

Leadership Project Report

2023 - 2024

This spring, the University of Illinois College of Law's Leadership Project completed its third full year. During the 2023-2024 academic year, the Project hosted or co-hosted more than a dozen events and attracted participation from more than 400 students, alumni, and friends.

Leadership Project Lectures

In 2023-2024, the Project hosted or co-hosted eight Leadership Project lectures/discussions, featuring the following guests:

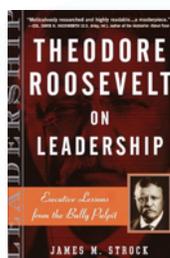
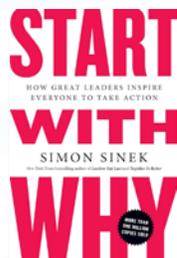
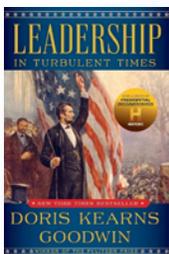
- **Pat Quinn**, former Governor of Illinois (co-sponsored by the Student Bar Association)
- **Tony Ghiotto**, director of the Kimball and Karen Anderson Center for Advocacy and Professionalism at the College of Law
- **Gina Johnson '15**, Chief Legal Officer, The Ridge (co-sponsored by Intellectual Property Legal Society)
- **Keith Horton '04**, General Manager, Allwyn North America, (co-sponsored by the Black Law Students Association)
- **Rob Beard '08**, General Counsel of Mastercard (co-sponsored by the Corporate Business Law Association)
- **Timmy Knudsen '15**, Chicago City Council – 43rd Ward Alderperson (co-sponsored by OUTLaw)
- **Karen Layng '87**, Strategic Leader, Corporate Board Director, and C-Suite Executive, and Licensed Arbitrator and Mediation (co-sponsored by the Women's Law Society)
- Student Leadership Panel (co-sponsored by the Student Bar Association)



Leadership Project Book Discussions

In 2023-24, the Project hosted three discussions featuring the following books:

- **“Leadership in Turbulent Times,”** Doris Kearns Goodwin
- **“Start with Why,”** Simon Sinek
- **“Theodore Roosevelt on Leadership: Executive Lessons from the Bully Pulpit,”** James M. Strock



Leadership Project Classes

During 2023-24, the College of Law offered approximately 25 classes that either focused on leadership expressly, such as Lawyers as Leaders, or that foster skills essential to good leadership. A full list of these classes is available [here](#).

Additionally, the College of Law and the Leadership Project invited the inaugural **Leader in Residence** to the College in February of 2024. Michael Strautmanis, the Executive Vice President for External Outreach of the Obama Foundation, visited the College from February 19-23, 2024. Professor Strautmanis taught the Lawyers as Leaders course mentioned above, featuring several guest speakers, including Eric Holder, former Attorney General of the United States. Professor Strautmanis also led the discussion of Simon Sinek's "Start with Why," guest lectured on Leadership in the Non-Profit Realm as part of the College's 1L Fundamentals of Legal Practice course and led a fireside chat with the College's American Constitutional Society.

Leader in Residence

A circular photograph of Michael Strautmanis, a man with glasses and a purple shirt, speaking and gesturing with his hands. The photo is set against a background of light blue sunburst rays.

Michael Strautmanis '94

CLE Programming

On June 5, 2024, the College hosted a free, virtual continuing legal education program for College of Law alumni and friends focused on leadership lessons from in-house legal counsel. Guest speakers included:

- **Sue Bettman '89**, a partner at Brunswick Group, a strategic communications advisory firm. Prior to this role, she served as Chief Administrative Officer and General Counsel of LSC Communications, then a publicly traded provider of digital and print communications and logistics services
- **Brian Ellis '91**, Senior Vice President and General Counsel of Danaher
- **Theresa Shea '97**, Executive Vice President, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary for Utz Brands, Inc., one of the largest salty snack companies in the United States.

2023-24 Leadership Project Scholars

This academic year, 20 students completed the required number of lectures, book discussions, and classes for certification as a College of Law Leadership Scholar. All 20 students participated in a half-day leadership retreat led by Fritz Seyferth, an accomplished executive coach and the author of the new book "The Shift From Me to Team." See this year's Leadership Scholars on the next page.



Learn more about the Leadership Project and how to get involved:

law.illinois.edu/leadership-project



Illinois Law

2023-24 Leadership Project Scholars



Serena Cheng
Class of 2024



Wanjiku Gatua
Class of 2024



Ekrem Genc
Class of 2024



Andrew Gray
Class of 2025



Luke Hemmerla
Class of 2024



Amanda Holme
Class of 2024



Akshay Krishnamani
Class of 2024



Naida Langdon
Class of 2024



Bobby Mannis
Class of 2025



Maryam Muhammad
Class of 2024



Miranda Nutt
Class of 2024



Emma Overton
Class of 2024



Audrey Pauls
Class of 2024



Mariana Renke
Class of 2024



Taylor Rioux
Class of 2024



Dalai Saruul-Erdene
Class of 2024



Joseph Self
Class of 2024



Se Hwa Shim
Class of 2024



Chris Truong
Class of 2024



Ashleigh Yarnik
Class of 2024