

Students Hear From Black Women Lawyers



Corporate Counsel Women of Color, Chicago State University and Chicago State Foundation hosted the My Life as a Lawyer Pre-Law Tour. PHOTO PROVIDED BY CHICAGO STATE UNIVERSITY.

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By Tia Carol Jones

Corporate Counsel Women of Color, Chicago State University and Chicago State Foundation hosted the My Life as a Lawyer Pre-Law Tour on Tuesday, March 12.

“At Chicago State, you have the opportunity to think about exploring a career as a lawyer,” said Chicago State President Zaldwaynaka “Z” Scott, adding that the room was filled with impressive women of color who are in the legal profession. “No matter where you come from, who you know or what you’ve studied, there’s always room for you in the legal profession and there is a pathway to law school, if you think you want to pursue that passion.”

Corporate Counsel Women of Color was founded by Laurie Robinson-Haden in 2004 with the mission to foster equity, diversity, and inclusion in the legal profession. The organization represents more than 10,000 law students, lawyers, judges and legal entrepreneurs.

In addition to Chicago State University, Clark-Atlanta University, Fisk University, Howard University Law School, Southern University Law School and Wilder’s Preparatory Academy Charter School were also part of the My Life as a Lawyer Pre-Law Tour.

Alfreda Bradley Coar, Executive Vice-President, Chief Legal and People Officer at Obama Foundation; Kim Foxx, former Cook County State’s Attorney; Patricia Brown Holmes, Managing Partner of Riley Safer Holmes & Cancilla LLP; Andrea Zopp, Managing Director of Cleveland Avenue; and Regina Jones, Senior Vice President, General Council and Secretary at ADM, spoke about what inspired



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them to have a career in law, their proudest moment and advice they would give their younger selves. Robinson-Haden, CEO and President of Corporate Counsel Women of Color, moderated the panel discussion.

Brown Holmes shared that she was encouraged by her friends to become a lawyer and when she took the LSATS, she received a high score and was accepted to law schools across the country but decided to stay in Illinois for law school. Zopp shared that during a summer working for her congressman in Washington, DC, she decided she wanted to become a lawyer because they were the people who interpreted the laws. Foxx shared her first interaction with a lawyer when she was six-years-old and how that affected her.

“I want the power to be able to help people and loosen the grip of whatever was causing angst,” Foxx said, adding that she went to college to study law and it was a natural fit. “My journey to this role truly was being in a position to help families that looked like my family.”

Foxx added that being Cook County State’s Attorney is her proudest moment and she is proud because she believes people get to see themselves reflected in her. She talked about the things she did as Cook County State’s Attorney, from vacating wrongful convictions to standing with the families of people who were victims of gun violence, as well as working with young lawyers and watching them grow in their careers.

Zopp said all of the women on the panel broke barriers and there is power in that. For her, she is most proud of being the first African American ever to report to the CEO. She said, it mattered that as the only Black person in the room she was able to have an influence and make an impact. In her role, she made sure to increase the diversity in the lawyers and their teams.

Brown Holmes said her proudest moment was the day she was sworn in as a judge. Brown Holmes was the youngest African American in the State of Illinois to be sworn in as an Associate Judge in Cook County.

“To represent my community, South side, Wild 100’s ... But to know, you can come from humble beginnings, but you can make it and you can do it, and you do it and you do it well,” Brown Holmes said, adding that she wants other young minorities to see that it can be done.

For more information about Corporate Counsel Women of Color, visit ccwomenofcolor.org.

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