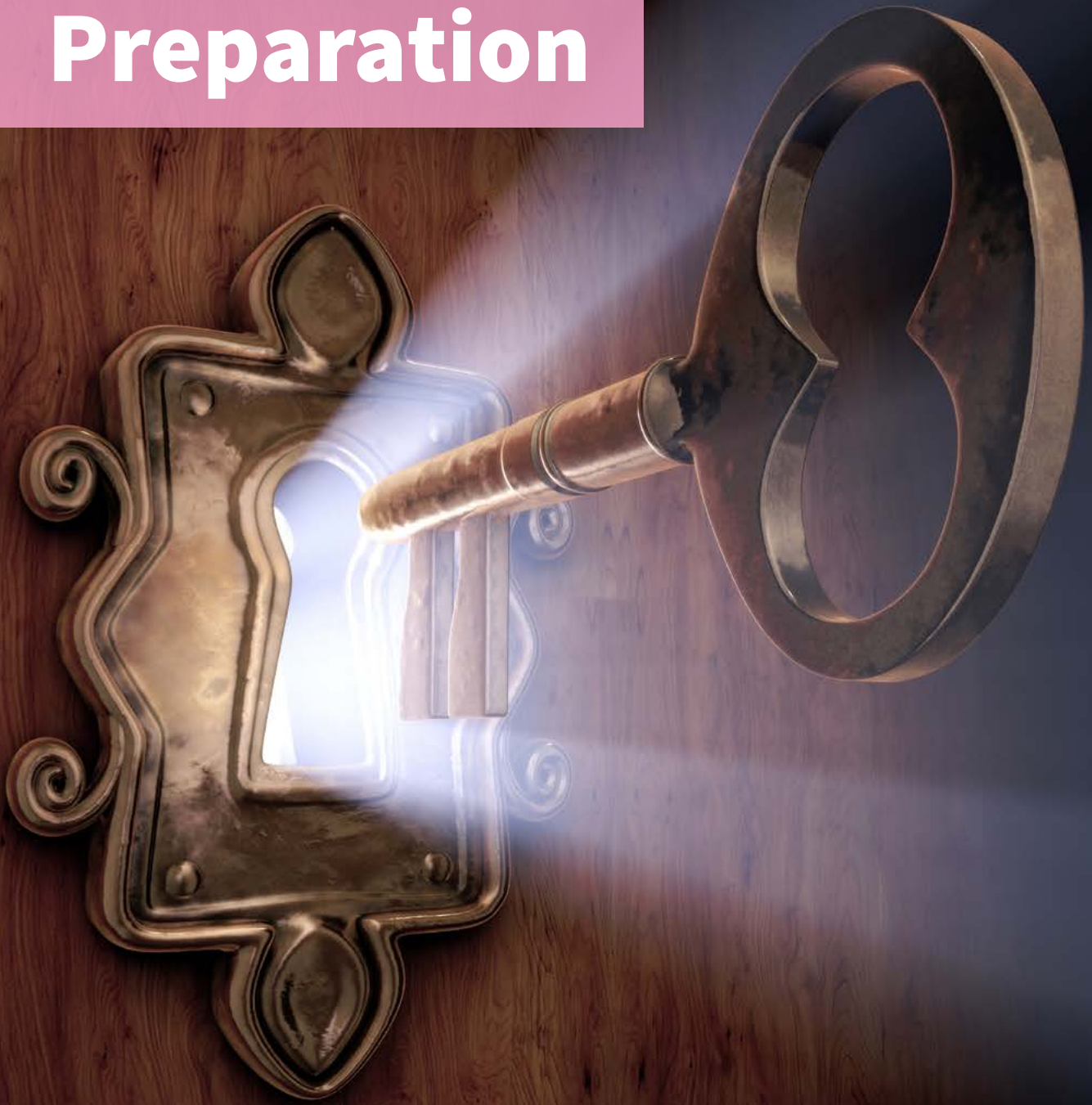


The Key to Success: Preparation



Kendra Brown, J.D., M.Div., LL.M.

In the Fall of 2007 I made the decision I would attend law school. I toyed with the idea for many years, but never really paused to see what was needed to put this plan into action. I spoke with my undergraduate pre-law advisor and friends who were attorneys.

They all had the same advice for me – “Attend a summer program.” I researched a few programs and found the Summer Program hosted by the Council on Legal Education Opportunity (CLEO), and I also saw the Charles Hamilton Houston Law School Preparatory Institute (CHH). I was working at least 40+ hours per week in a Congressional office, so I knew any program I attended would have to comply with the demands of my work schedule. I decided to attend the 5-week long Charles Hamilton Houston Law School Preparatory Institute at Georgetown University Law Center. The courses were held in the evenings and allowed individuals to maintain their full-time positions. I was familiar with summer programs which were full-time live-in programs, but I knew I had to stay in the Washington, DC area. Thus, I knew CHH was the best program for me.

CHH was created in 1979 by Attorney Donald Temple. Joining forces with him at the start of the program was Georgetown University Law Center Associate Dean Everett Bellamy. The program lasts 7 weeks during the summer and provides students a preliminary understanding of Legal Research & Writing, Civil Procedure and Litigation, Torts, and Contracts. The instructors are notable attorneys and leaders in the legal field including Attorney Kim Keenan, Harvard Law Professor Charles Ogletree, Law Professor Tanya Washington, Administrative Law Judge Jennifer Long, Judge David Simmons, and Attorney Donald Temple.

Participants have the following reflections of the program:

The program to me was an opportunity to gain confidence in my abilities, early knowledge of the judicial system, and network. – Jennito Simon, Assistant State Attorney, Florida 2nd Judicial District


I am, because of the Charles Hamilton Preparatory Institute. The Institute instilled in me the confidence to excel against any odds. Many of those associated with the program remain my longtime friends. More programs like this should exist nationwide for diverse students interested in navigating law school and life as a barrister. – Nicholas Austin, Associate, Foley & Lardner LLP

For over three decades, the Charles Hamilton Houston Law School Preparatory Institute (CHH) has been preparing students of color with the necessary skills to exceed in law school. It breaks down any mental barriers that may exist with regard to any student’s intellectual ability to compete at the highest level. The program builds confidence and provides an opportunity for students to hone those skills most needed in the study of law. Our motto--Dedicated to Excellence--is what we instill in our students. – Former Dean Everett Bellamy

In conclusion, I would encourage everyone considering attending law school to participate in a program such as CHH. CHH gave me confidence, an amazing foundation, and also connected me with leaders in the legal profession who taught from their own experiences. Programs such as these establish a great foundation for the understanding of the rigor of law school. Law school is extremely difficult and the road to law school should be undertaken with a great deal of preparation. The preparation is just a part of the equation, but assuredly, is a needed step on the road to law school.

Read more about the Charles Hamilton Houston Law Preparatory Institute here:

<http://chhlawinstitute.org/>



Kendra Brown currently serves as Chief of Staff for Rep. G. K. Butterfield (NC-01) in the United States House of Representatives. Most recently, she was the Senior Director for Diversity, Inclusion and Affinity at American University Washington College of Law where she led the law school's diversity and inclusion initiatives and work. Her other previous roles include Deputy Chief of Staff and Legislative Director for Representative Dwight Evans of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Policy Director of the Congressional Black Caucus in the United States Congress; and Counsel for Representative Maxine Waters of Los Angeles, California.

She is a former National Chair of the National Black Law Students Association (NBLSA). During her term as National Chair, NBLSA was active in election protection, leadership training and development, academic planning, career development, and extensive advocacy efforts.

Kendra graduated from Hampton University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science with a minor in Business Management. She began her seminary studies by pursuing coursework at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia, completed her Master of Divinity at Howard University Divinity School, and received her law degree from Vermont Law School. Additionally, Kendra attended the George Washington University School of Law for her Master of Laws.

She is committed to community engagement and empowerment as a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and The Links, Incorporated. She serves on the Leadership Committee of Street Law, Inc, a global, nonpartisan nonprofit organization that develops classroom and community programs to educate young people about law and government. She serves in a number of additional capacities, including as a Youth Minister and Minister of Music in her local church and has been a part of the executive board of both the Washington Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division and the National Bar Association Young Lawyer's Division.