

Bennett G. Hornstein Memorial Scholarship

2024 – Eliana Reiss, Creighton University School of Law

The Bennett G. Hornstein Memorial Scholarship for aspiring or current law students has been awarded to Eliana Reiss for the 2024-2025 academic year. This award is accompanied by a \$5,000 stipend.

Eliana received her B.S. in Political Science, graduating *magna cum laude* from Northwest Missouri State University in Maryville, Missouri. As an undergraduate, Ellie was a member of Pi Sigma Alpha Political Honor Society, participated in Sigma Kappa, the Mock Trial Team, and served as a Peer Advisor. At Creighton University School of Law, she participates in the Women in Law Society and the intraschool Negotiation Competition. She will graduate from Creighton Law in May 2025.

From a young age, Ellie has been driven by a passion for service. Whether volunteering at the Munroe Myer Institute, participating in community food drives, or organizing the Temple Israel Spaghetti Dinner in support of Camp Rainbow, giving back is an integral part of her character. As she pursues her legal career, this commitment to service has guided her to make a meaningful difference through pro bono work. Since beginning law school, Ellie volunteers monthly at the Women's Center for Advancement (WCA) at their victim advocacy clinic. During these clinics, she meets with survivors, listens to their stories, and helps them formulate legal questions. She then takes these questions to an onsite attorney who provides free legal advice.

Ellie spent last summer as a law clerk for Johnson and Mock Attorneys at Law, analyzing case details and evidence including police reports, medical records, previously filed pleadings, and applicable laws. She is currently a law clerk with Oestman & Albertsen Law. She works on their appointment case which includes indigent parents in custody cases as well as criminal defendants who cannot afford counsel. Ashley Albertsen, Partner at Oestmann & Albertsen shared, "Ms. Reiss has been a huge asset to our firm. She conducts legal research, assists in client meetings, and helps develop trial strategies. She is eager to learn and very self-motivated. Ms. Reiss is also always empathetic to our clients, who are often experiencing very low points when they first come to us."

Despite her busy schedule, Ellie makes time to teach at Temple Israel's Religious School on Sunday mornings. Rabbi Deana Berezin shared, "Ellie is a tremendous role model to our learners, and someone I know they all look up to. She is an excellent example of someone who has successfully and intentionally been able to blend her secular and Jewish priorities. We are so fortunate she has chosen to come back to Omaha for her post-graduate studies and to reengage with our Omaha Jewish community."

Ellie's clerking experience and her time at WCA have solidified for her the privilege and responsibility that comes with the ability to navigate the legal system. It has also shown her there is a lack of legal resources in the Omaha community for those in need. Ellie feels strongly that pro bono work is not merely a professional obligation but also a moral imperative that drives her.

Ellie Reiss embodies the qualities that Bennet G. Hornstein exemplified: a high standard of academic achievement, an adventurous spirit, and a desire to take on an active role in service to the community. Applicants must also be attending law school at the University of Nebraska or Creighton University.

The late Bennett Hornstein, assistant Douglas County public defender for 20 years, was a passionate advocate of the rights of those who could not afford a lawyer. After his battle with cancer and untimely death at the age of 46, his family established the Bennett G. Hornstein Endowment Fund in partnership with the Jewish Federation of Omaha Foundation. This fund provides an annual scholarship for a law student who will carry on Hornstein's commitment to working for those members of society whom no one else wants to help.

For more information about the annual Bennett G. Hornstein Memorial Scholarship, please visit the Jewish Federation of Omaha Foundation website www.jfofoundation.org. Scholarship applications are accepted each year, per instructions on the website.

The Foundation welcomes donations to the Bennett G. Hornstein Endowment Fund in support of the scholarship. Donations may be made via The Foundation's website, www.jfofoundation.org, or by mail to: Jewish Federation of Omaha Foundation, 333 South 132nd Street, Omaha, NE 68154. For more information, call the Foundation at 402.334.6551.