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## Daskalopoulos '18 a Witness to Historic Court Case

July 21, 2015

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Illinois Wesleyan University political science major Ally Daskalopoulos '18 never expected to witness history during her summer internship in the Nashville (Tenn.) District Attorney's office.

Daskalopoulos was in the courtroom June 23 when a Criminal Court judge declared a mistrial in what has become known as the Vanderbilt rape case. Two former Vanderbilt University football players were found guilty in January of raping an unconscious student, but defense attorneys asked for a mistrial after discovering one juror had not disclosed that he was a victim of a sexual assault.

"This is an unforgettable memory," said Daskalopoulos (Morton Grove, Ill.) "The process of jury selection is often overlooked, and the duty itself can be unpopular. But this case proved to highlight the importance of the jury and all they are held responsible for when determining the fate of the defendants."

Daskalopoulos hopes to become a lawyer, an aspiration solidified during her first weeks at Illinois Wesleyan. As a student in Professor Dave Marvin's Gateway Colloquium course "Legal Decision Making," Daskalopoulos and her classmates were required to form solid arguments to defend their positions.



Ally Daskalopoulos '18 was familiar with the Vanderbilt case because her aunt, alumna Demetria Kalodimos '81 (center) had been reporting on it as the news anchor for Nashville's NBC affiliate.



Ally Daskalopoulos '18 worked as a victim witness intern in the Domestic Violence unit of the Nashville DA's office.

"That class first taught me the basics of forming a concise argument," she said. "I thought back to the class every day when I saw real arguments constructed in front of me in the courtroom."

Daskalopoulos already had been following the Vanderbilt rape case because her aunt, Illinois Wesleyan alumna Demetria Kalodimos '81, had been reporting on the case as the news anchor for the NBC affiliate in Nashville. "She is an incredible mentor to me, and she encouraged me to apply for the internship in the DA's office," said Daskalopoulos. "She knew of my interest in the law and thought the internship would be a great opportunity to discover whether this was truly the career I should strive for."

After she was selected for the internship, Daskalopoulos was given her choice of units within the DA's office. Influenced by the rape case, she became a victim witness intern in the Domestic Violence unit, where her duties included printing warrants and affidavits and researching crime scene photos. And as a Hispanic Studies minor, she assisted in translating when Spanish-speaking victims or witnesses testified in court. In her spare time, she was allowed to attend court to witness trials in progress.

"I've learned so much in such a short amount of time," Daskalopoulos said of the five-week internship. "The experience has confirmed my

desire to attend law school and become an attorney."

At Illinois Wesleyan Daskalopoulos is a columnist for the student newspaper *The Argus*, public relations coordinator for Alpha Gamma Delta sorority and a member of Alpha Lambda Delta honor society for first-year students.