

A L U M N I

S P O T L I G H T :

A T H A N A S I A

“ A T H I E ” L I V A S



Name: Athanasia Livas

Hometown: Lexington, Kentucky

Law School: Yale Law School '19

Seminar Year: Summer 2017

Athie Livas, Kentuckian, daughter of Greek immigrants, and champion debater, completes her clerkship at the Supreme Court of the United States.

Born and raised in the Bluegrass State, Athie Livas brings genuine warmth and leadership to her legal career. After graduating from Johns Hopkins University, Livas interned at the Supreme Court and worked as a paralegal for Bancroft (now Kirkland & Ellis). At Yale Law School, she quickly rose to become a leader in her community. Livas explains:

"One of the most rewarding parts of my law school experience was serving as the President of the Yale Federalist Society. I was President during a tumultuous year in the law school's history. And I felt the deep responsibility of representing our chapter well. Most of our time leading up to law school is spent working on ourselves. We hone our skills, develop our networks, and think about our own futures. That year was meaningful for me because I felt like I was working on something bigger."

After law school, Livas completed a number of prestigious clerkships. She clerked for Judge Amul Thapar on the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals and Judge Dabney Friedrich on the District Court for the District of Columbia. She is now clerking for Justice Brett Kavanaugh at the Supreme Court of the United States.



The following interview was conducted by Elana Quint for the Georgetown Center for the Constitution Alumni Association.

Question: What made you want to become a lawyer?

A: The idea of trying to convince people with reason. I participated in activities growing up that helped me hone this skill. I was part of the Kentucky Youth Assembly, Lincoln Douglas debate, and mock trial. And I'm grateful I grew up in Kentucky, where there is this sense of neighborliness that allows you to assume good faith, even in disagreement. I believe effective persuasion is meeting someone where they are and trying to be responsive to what they care about. It's about understanding people.

Q: How did you hear about the Originalism Summer Seminar?

A: Professor Barnett visited the Yale Federalist Society and presented his pitch for the seminar. I was sold. I attended the seminar during my 1L summer.

Q: What surprised you in the Seminar?

A: I was blown away by the diversity of thought within originalism. The debate in the academy remains robust. It is not a monolith.

Q: Any advice for future applicants/attendees of the Seminar?

A: One of the greatest benefits is the opportunity to meet your peers from other law schools. Be sure to talk to every single person.

Q: Any advice for future clerks?

A: Try and understand your judge: what does she find persuasive? What are her core values? Keep these in mind when you make recommendations. More broadly, law clerks should be mindful of their role as an agent to their judge. The judge is the one with the Article III commission. A bit of humility goes a long way. Finally, work really, really hard. A year goes by in a flash.

Q: Finally, any reading suggestions?

A: For law-related reading, I would recommend Thinking Like a Writer and Scalia Dissents. When it comes to fiction, I love fantasy and would suggest anything by Brandon Sanderson (author of The Way of Kings).

Applications for the 2022 Originalism Summer Seminar will open in December.