

My Summer at the [City] Circuit Court

No recent experience stands out more in my mind as being beneficial, influential, or worthwhile than my [summer internship] at the [City] Circuit Court. My time observing, exploring, and working in the legal field provided me with broad real-world experience, and memories I will always hold on to. I entered the Circuit Court unsure what being involved in law meant, and left with the confidence and awareness needed to pursue such a career in the field, as well many happy memories.

In the months leading up to summer vacation last school year, I was hard at work trying to figure out how I would spend my four months' time off from school. I was hoping to do something that would expand my interests and understanding of what possibilities are out there, and I knew I wouldn't find such an experience solely spending my time working at a fruit market or restaurant. The [City] Circuit Court was only a short drive from my house, and the prospect of a law-related career interested me, so I decided to contact the Court Administrator to find out if any Internship opportunities were available to college undergrads. He responded promptly, and offered to give me an unpaid position in the Judicial Aide Department. I accepted his offer, and after perfecting the knot and length of my tie on the morning of [Date], I was off to my first day in the career world. Little did I know my experience with this court would not only give me many fond memories, but also teach me how to conduct myself in professional settings, grant me insight into what I want to do with my life, give me a list of contacts I will hold on to for a long time, and overall make me a more well-rounded and qualified person.

I met [Chief of the Judicial Aide Department] at the Circuit Court, who served as my boss and gateway into the rest of the Court. Over the course of the summer, [Chief of the Judicial Aide Department] answered all of my many questions, taught me the ins-and-outs of the Court,

and explained to me how the legal system works. She introduced me to many key people, and sent me to watch some of the more interesting proceedings. In the Judicial Aide Department, I assisted [Chief of the Judicial Aide Department] in completing requests for reimbursement to people who had utilized court-appointed attorneys, verifying the amounts they owed via the Court's computer system, and filling out the appropriate forms.

Through [Chief of the Judicial Aide Department] I met [Referee], who was happy to let me sit in on her cases. I watched as she confidently and effectively dealt with a room full of disgruntled parents, crying children, bantering case workers, and arguing lawyers. [Referee] even arranged for me a tour of the Juvenile Justice Center, which opened my eyes as it was the first time I had toured a detention center. Among introducing me to several other referees, [Referee] also took me to meet [Honorable Judge], the Presiding Judge of the Family Division. I instantly liked the Judge, and felt as though I could spend all day listening to his political opinions and perspicacity. [Referee] reasoned with [Chief of the Judicial Aide Department] that my time at the Circuit Court would be more valuable if I spent some time with [Judge], and it was from this point on I split my work days working in Judicial Aide and shadowing the Judge.

[Judge], although over 50 years older than me, was an incredible mentor. Extremely patient and wise, he could offer sound advice and a solid opinion on most any issue. At 74 years old, [Judge] was in his last term as a Circuit Court Judge. Judges are only permitted to serve until they are 70 years old, but [Judge] was elected to his final eight-year term before he reached that limit. Having just finished my freshman year of college, there was little I could offer the Judge besides a good work ethic and an eagerness to learn. He understood this, and had no objections to taking me under his wing. His interest in politics, history, and law must have rubbed off on

me, for I structured my Sophomore year schedule with Public Policy, History, and Political Science, in preparation for law school.

In addition to observing and taking notes on the Judge's proceedings from inside the jury box, I was expected to fill out case summary sheets each Friday afternoon. These cases were for the upcoming week, and by jotting down the important facts regarding the case, the Judge's courtroom ran more smoothly. He also had me edit a few of his legal opinions, which I found to be very interesting. I was able to ask him questions about the legalities surrounding his decision, and at times he would even ask for my own opinion on the matter. The Judge introduced me to many lawyers who were happy to give me some acumen into what exactly becoming and being a lawyer entails. He also introduced me to his best friend of 40 years [...], who was a mediator for the court. [Judge's best friend] worked with spouses over the details of their agreement of divorce. Observing some of his cases taught me the importance of integrity and loyalty, and also how to take two sides of an argument and concede with a middle ground.

In [Judge]'s chambers is where the most interesting and valuable experiences took place. It was here that I found myself sitting at an expansive conference table amongst several of the most respected and intelligent Judges, lawyers, referees, and mediators in all of [County]. On a daily basis I got the chance to share lunch and conversation with these influential people, people I not only looked up to as role models but also as friends. I respected them not only because of their high social and political standing, but also because, simply put, they were successes; they had made it. Watching the Judges and lawyers helped me to envision myself in the future, and what I want my life to be like. Talking with them assisted me in garnering a practical approach to fulfilling my own dreams. I saw first-hand the lucrative and never-dull careers that hard work can offer. Although being able to act as a fly on the wall during the courtroom proceedings was

beneficial and interesting, I think being able to observe these high ranking figures in a slightly more relaxed setting was one of the most beneficial and entertaining things I have ever done. From listening to the Judges debate over their political opinions, or the lawyers argue their cases, or even listening to the Judge tell a funny story, there was rarely a dull or personally disadvantageous moment in his chambers.

My internship also provided me with great learning experiences outside of the courthouse. [The Judge's daughter] was running for his soon to be open seat at the Circuit Court, and I donated some of my time to helping her out on her campaign. I was very much willing to volunteer for the campaign, although as I came to find out, this would be like no other volunteering experience I had ever been a part of. This became fully elucidated in my mind as I strolled the veranda of [Country Club] with a plate of fine hors d'oeuvres, and when I sat over dinner with some of the most successful people in the [County Area]. Before one of these fundraisers, the Judge even invited me to his home to discuss some of his favorite books in his library, particularly ones about Abraham Lincoln. In addition to these lavish fundraisers which I was so thankful to attend, I also helped put up campaign signs and make phone calls to voters. I also handed out carnations fitted with "Viviano" stickers at the [Memorial Parade], as well as at a poll location on voting day.

Another product of my internship that was absolutely invaluable was the vast list of contacts I accrued by the end of summer. I can confidently and appreciatively say that I befriended some of the most significant members of [County], most of which I plan to be in contact with well into my future. Although it is to the small extent to which a [student] over the span of three months can accomplish such a thing, I made a name for myself in [County] this past summer. On [Date], the last day of my Internship, I realized I had made a network of

contacts through the court, whether it was Judges, Referees, mediators, lawyers, officers, or court employees. All of these people gave me valuable perspectives and helped me to make the most out of my summer. They have opened, and hopefully will continue to open, new doors of opportunity for me, and for that I am very grateful.

My summer internship at the [City] Circuit Court was truly a rewarding experience. Whether it was working on the computer in Judicial Aide, sitting in on a case of a Referee or mediator, observing [Judge] command his courtroom fairly and adeptly, attending a fundraiser, or just sitting in the Judge's chambers casually talking over lunch on a summer afternoon, I gained a wealth of memories and real-world knowledge that will continue to better me as I complete college and beyond.