

August 28, 2006

Dan Ruben
Founder and Executive Director
Equal Justice America
Building II-Suite 204
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben,

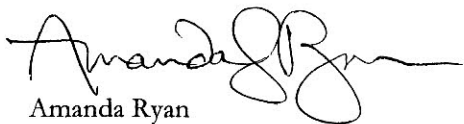
I had an amazing time at my 1L summer internship in the Housing Unit at South Brooklyn Legal Services. Starting out, I wasn't sure exactly what housing law in this context would entail, or whether I would find it interesting; I quickly realized, however, that many of the issues that come up with regard to New York City landlord-tenant relationships are fascinating. There was quite a bit of a learning curve at first – I won't be taking Property until the first semester of my 2L year, and I was researching issues of compensation in eminent domain proceedings on my second day there. However, I quickly got up to speed on the basics and was able to spend the summer exploring a whole host of issues that I hadn't even known existed before arriving at South Brooklyn.

At South Brooklyn, each law student intern is assigned to one attorney, who is primarily responsible for providing the student with work. My attorney, Jennifer Levy, was one of the co-directors of the Housing Unit and, for this reason, seemed to have a bit more latitude in choosing which cases she (and, by association, I) took on. This meant that, in addition to having a chance to do routine Housing Unit work like drafting motions and filing cases in court – which I found fascinating – I also had the chance to do extensive background research on a host of issues relevant to large-scale urban development. Jennifer was involved in developing litigation strategies in opposition to several big development projects in the Downtown Brooklyn area, and had me research such issues as the Federal Housing Act, the SEQRA approval process, and the right of rental tenants to sue the government for unjustified taking of property.

My favorite project over the summer was researching and preparing questions for cross-examination of a local landlord before the Division of Housing and Community Renewal. The cross-examination was part of a long-running eviction case which the landlord had brought against our client, a woman who had been living in an apartment in one of his Park Slope buildings since she was born and who, for this reason, was paying less than half what most of the other tenants paid. The background research was like detective work, and formulating the questions themselves was a great learning experience and something that I felt very lucky to have a chance to do. The landlord eventually withdrew his case against our client, which was the best outcome we could have hoped for, and that outcome was the most satisfying event of the summer.

In sum, I am very thankful to Equal Justice America for providing the funding to make my experience this summer possible. I am so glad that I was given this opportunity.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amanda Ryan", with a stylized, flowing script.

Amanda Ryan
New York University School of Law, J.D. 2007