

October 20.2016

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
13540 E. Boundary Road
Building 2-Suite 204

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I am writing to sincerely thank you for the award I received to perform pro-bono legal advocacy work this summer. Because of EJA's generous fellowship, I was able to volunteer at the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau. In addition to allowing me to have a meaningful summer, this award has changed the course of my legal career, as I now have joined the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau full-time for the next two years.

This summer I focused on primarily on housing cases. I helped five clients avoid eviction by negotiating with their landlord attorney, filing motions, and arguing in court. I had the opportunity to work both on "at-fault" and "non-payment" cases. All of my housing clients suffered from extreme poverty and would have faced homelessness if they had been evicted. This would have almost certainly been the case if they did not have an attorney, so Equal Justice America is the reason many of these families still have housing. Many of my clients had children, suffered from disabilities, and were the victims of domestic violence. Without this stipend, they would have continued to have no one to speak up for them or their rights.

At the Bureau, my supervising attorney allowed me to truly take ownership of my cases. I worked with clients, their families, social workers, medical providers, and mediators. I also had the chance to research, write, and file an appeal that is currently awaiting an appellate trial date.

I also had the chance to represent clients in the Department of Unemployment, advocating on behalf of workers who had been denied benefits when their employment terminated at no fault of their own. I won both of my hearings and am thrilled that these clients were finally compensated for the benefits they were unfairly denied.

Building client relationships and helping them in their moments of greatest need meant so much to me. I felt emotionally invested in my clients and committed to helping them overcome a system that feels designed to hold them back. This was particularly meaningful for me due to my humble background. My parents did not attend college and making it to law school was a long and arduous road. EJA's generous award allowed me the opportunity to give back to the community in a very important way that I otherwise wouldn't have been able to do.

As a result of my amazing summer experience, I decided to apply to join the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau full time during the next two years. I was fortunate enough to be accepted and this is now shaping my legal curriculum experience. Many of my current cases are clients that I represented over the summer, and I continue to build relationships with them and advocate on their behalf both inside and outside the courtroom. I am so appreciative to Equal Justice America for making this possible.

Best,

Carson Denny
Harvard Law School, Expected Graduation May 2018

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October 18, 2016

Dan Ruben, Executive Director
Equal Justice America
Building II, Suite 204
13540 East Boundary Rd.
Midlothian, MA 23112

Re: Carson Denny

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am writing to you to inform you of the valuable work performed by Carson Denny, who received funding from your organization this summer. Carson served as a clinical fellow at the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau, working forty hours per week under my supervision. The Legal Aid Bureau is a poverty law office and a teaching clinic of Harvard Law School. Students who work at the Legal Aid Bureau – whether during the academic year or the summer – receive training and close supervision while working as advocates for indigent clients in civil matters.

Throughout his time at the Legal Aid Bureau, Carson proved to be a motivated, capable, and responsible intern, who excelled in every aspect of the program. He spent the majority of his time assisting in the representation of low-income tenants facing eviction in Boston Housing Court summary process proceedings and related administrative matters. In that context, he conducted client interviews and counseled and advised clients; carried out fact investigations, especially relating to conditions of disrepair in his clients' apartments; interviewed city inspectors and other potential third-party witnesses; conducted legal research and drafted pleadings, motions, and discovery; issued trial subpoenas; prepared direct and cross-examination of witnesses for trial; and negotiated settlements with opposing counsel. Carson carried out each of these tasks with enthusiasm, accuracy, and thoroughness.

In one particularly difficult challenge, Carson took responsibility early in the summer for getting a relatively complicated case ready for trial. He spent significant time analyzing documents and other potential evidence, conducting legal research on the relevant claims and defenses, constructing a theory of the case, and crafting testimony for our client and third-party witnesses.

Although the case was settled shortly before the trial date, I'm certain, based on the thoroughness of his preparation, that we would have put on a strong case at trial. Indeed, it was Carson's thorough preparation that enabled him to obtain a settlement that allowed his elderly and disabled client to remain in her home.

In addition to his regular casework, Carson participated once every other week throughout the summer in a Boston Bar Association sponsored "attorney-for-the-day" program at the Boston Housing Court, which offers trial-day advice and counsel to pro se tenants facing eviction. In that context, Carson assisted indigent tenants in preparing answers, discovery requests, and motions, and guided them in the procedural as well as the substantive aspects of presenting their cases. This task required Carson not only to master the basic elements of Massachusetts landlord-tenant law, but to utilize that knowledge to spot issues in cases, to devise strategies based on such issue-spotting, and to explain those strategies to laypeople, all in a time-pressured and crisis-filled setting. Carson consistently met this difficult challenge with professionalism and passion.

Throughout his time at the Legal Aid Bureau, Carson was curious and thoughtful about each case that he worked on and applied himself diligently to resolving each problem as it presented itself. He was also clearly moved and touched by the difficult conditions he found his clients to be living in, and demonstrated a caring and attentive manner with each. Moreover, Carson was charming and open-hearted to all – students, staff, and clients alike.

It was a great pleasure to work with Carson, and I sincerely appreciate your organization's financial assistance which enabled him to provide such outstanding service to our clients and the community.

Sincerely,

Patricia Whiting