

August 26, 2010

Dan Ruben

Executive Director

Equal Justice America

13540 East Boundary Road, Building II, Suite 204

Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben,

This letter provides a summary of my summer 2010 internship at the Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago (LAF). Due to the generous funding provided by Equal Justice America, I was able to live in Chicago for the summer and gain valuable public interest experience working with LAF attorneys.

LAF works with clients in many different areas including housing, public benefits, consumer and family law. Working at LAF allowed me the opportunity to work with low income clients while simultaneously improving my knowledge in different public interest fields. However, most of my time during the summer was spent working on family law issues, including orders of protection and divorce.

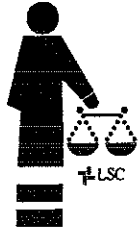
One project that I worked on, a divorce case for a young woman, whose husband was a member of a dangerous Mexican gang, was one of the most rewarding experiences of the summer. Our client had been abused many times by her husband, and wanted to divorce him in Illinois. I had the opportunity to not only write up motions and briefs for her case, but also to represent her in court to do a default divorce prove up. After her divorce was finalized, she was so thankful for the representation offered by LAF. This case really helped me to understand how difficult situations involving family can be, and how difficult it is for low income people to go through these situations without representation.

In summation, this summer gave me valuable insight into the world of public interest law, and convinced me that it is essential for lawyers to provide representation to low income clients. Also, I would like to express my gratitude to Equal Justice America for providing me the opportunity to impact the lives of LAF clients living on the west side of Chicago. This summer has been one of the most valuable experiences of my young legal career and it will most certainly affect my career path in the future.

Sincerely,

Joel Smith

University of Wisconsin Law School, 2011



Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago

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August 20, 2010

Tim Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
Building II, Suite 204
13540 East Boundary Road, Midlothian, VA 23112

Re: Joel Smith
Law Student at Legal Assistance Foundation
of Metropolitan Chicago - Summer of 2010

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am writing pertaining to Mr. Joel Smith, who worked, during the summer of 2010, as a law student at the Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago. We are a nonprofit agency, commonly known as Legal Aid, which provides legal services in multiple areas of civil practice to the low-income communities in the metropolitan Chicago area. Joel worked at the neighborhood office located in the Lawndale section of Chicago that primarily serves the African-American and Hispanic communities located on the westside of the city and the western suburbs.

During the 10 weeks that Joel was with us, his responsibilities included doing research, interviewing clients, drafting pleadings, legal memoranda and advocacy letters to various governmental entities. The areas of practice that Joel worked in were wide ranging and included unemployment, social security, federal income tax law, divorce and domestic violence, evictions, torts, and administrative law pertaining to various types of federal housing subsidies. Notwithstanding the varied nature of the work and the difficulty of some of the assignments, Joel consistently worked quickly and provided a very good work product.

For example, Joel was asked to research federal income tax law to determine in a divorce case the availability, to a custodial low-income parent, of certain income tax benefits (i.e., head of household status, earned income tax credit, child and dependent care credit, child tax credit, the additional child tax credit) when the noncustodial parent was given the dependent care exemptions. Joel completed the assignment quickly and produced a memo that was very comprehensive. As a result, after a little editing, it was distributed to the other sixty-plus attorneys in the agency.

Joel's written work was good. A very outstanding quality was Joel's ability to take and understand conceptual criticism or comments of his early drafts. As a result, attorneys did not have to do a line-by-line edit of his written work to get the final result they wanted.

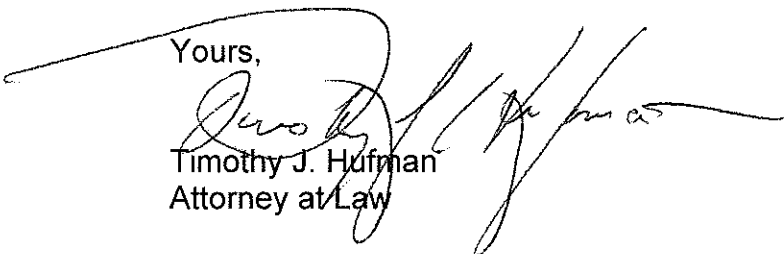
Also important was Joel's ability to work independently, yet having the judgment to know when he needed to ask for guidance. This manifested itself in his written work product as well as in individual cases that were basically his responsibility.

In addition, Joel was very flexible in accepting the multiple tasks that he was given, often simultaneously, by the ten attorneys in the office. He was easy to work with and showed initiative in following through on tasks, even when they went in directions that were beyond the initial instructions given by the assigning attorney.

Finally, Joel's rapport with the attorneys and other staff in the office also extended to the clients we serve. Joel was frequently given the responsibility of conducting the initial interview with clients seeking our services. Many he interviewed were unsophisticated, scattered, inarticulate, and sometimes evasive. Notwithstanding these challenges, Joel became very good at obtaining the essential information that was needed to assess the merits of the cases and did so while remaining courteous and respectful to the clients he interviewed.

In summary, Joel became a very important part of our office this summer. His work was very good, his demeanor was always professional, and he was just a pleasure to work with. If further information is needed, please feel free to contact me.

Yours,



Timothy J. Huffman
Attorney at Law