

# **PARAG RAJENDRA KHANDHAR**

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August 14, 2007

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

## **Re: Equal Justice America Legal Services Summer Fellowship**

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I am writing this letter after completing a very successful and rewarding summer clerkship with the Arlington Office of Legal Services of Northern Virginia (LSNV), supported almost fully by an Equal Justice America Legal Services Fellowship.

Previous to my work at LSNV this summer, I had a general understanding of what it meant to be a lawyer for poor people, although I had only basic exposure to the daily challenges that legal services attorneys faced. At LSNV, I worked with a team of lawyers who practiced in housing, consumer, and family law. The depth of knowledge, commitment, and drive struck me almost immediately. As a law student interested in pursuing a career in public interest, it was quite encouraging to work with attorneys who were barely compensated for their services, yet enthusiastic and passionate about their work.

I worked with one attorney in particular, who had a docket of housing and consumer law cases. While he had only graduated law school last year, his poise and ability to zealously advocate the cases of his clients was remarkable. It was clear that he had worked hard to learn the relevant laws and apply his understanding to the cases in front of him. He also had the ability to put clients and applicants for services at ease when he met with them, which was a skill that many people do not pick up from law school.

He was also an excellent supervisor, giving me routine access to clients through his intake, interviews, motions hearings, meetings concerning pending court dates, and written correspondence. The face-to-face with clients was one of the principal reasons I wanted to work in legal aid this summer, and my supervisor made certain that I had that opportunity. I accompanied him on bi-weekly practice area task force meetings within LSNV for the housing and consumer groups. These meetings gave me a great deal of insight into the process of case review, litigation strategy, and dialogue between new and more seasoned attorneys. It was quite rewarding to be exposed to the senior attorneys and to see the way that they supported the younger lawyers to address case questions.

Under the guidance of the seasoned staff attorneys at LSNV, I was able to both explore and engage the law in the service of poor people, and developed my ability to serve them better when I graduate. My specific role with the organization included legal research and writing, intake and interviews with applicants for services and current clients, drafting and filing of court documents including motions, interrogatories, requests for documents, notices of service, and answers, as well as the drafting of

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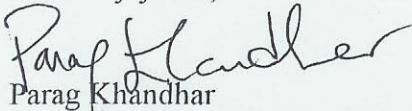
correspondence with clients and opposing counsel. I had the opportunity to work at the front desk of the organization, and to see the importance of intake and front-desk staff in the operation of a legal services organization first-hand.

My cumulative experience at LSNV has helped me in 3 concrete ways. First, by giving me direct contact with attorneys who spent a great deal of their time litigating on behalf of poor people, it has made me more certain that I would also like to litigate. Second, because I had more exposure to family law cases at LSNV than ever before, I have registered for a family law course at school and am very interested in developing a working knowledge of issues that affect poor and immigrant families. Finally, because of the large number of immigrant clients at LSNV, I have committed to work on my language skills in Gujarati and Spanish, and take 2 immigration law classes in my final year of law school.

While some of my fellow law clerks struggled to balance a part-time job and the internship because they had not secured independent funding for the summer, the legal services fellowship from Equal Justice America allowed me to work full-time with LSNV and dedicate myself to learning as much as possible while there. I feel very fortunate that I was given this opportunity to work in a public interest organization, and would not have been able to do so without the support of Equal Justice America.

If you have any questions about my time with LSNV or anything mentioned above, please feel free to contact me at (917) 312-6569 or [parag.khandhar@gmail.com](mailto:parag.khandhar@gmail.com). I thank you and Equal Justice America for supporting my goal of becoming an effective public interest attorney.

Sincerely yours,



Parag Khandhar

American University Washington College of Law  
Class of 2008