

Dan Ruben  
Executive Director  
Equal Justice America  
13540 East Boundary Road  
Midlothian, Virginia 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I had the pleasure of working as a legal intern in the Charlottesville office of the Central Virginia Legal Aid Society this summer. Accepting this position was made possible due in no small part to the generous grant I received from your organization, for which I am tremendously grateful. In my role at CVLAS I served under the office's managing attorney, Robin Edwards, who provided me with the opportunities and guidance to develop skills essential for me to succeed in my future career as a lawyer.

While my proficiency in legal research and writing improved dramatically during my time at CVLAS, I believe the most valuable takeaway from my summer experience was the exposure I received to the human aspect of law which cannot be replicated in the classroom by reading cases or spotting issues on an exam. Every client who came through our doors faced a problem, and the individual toll caused by the consequences of these problems were increased exponentially given the indigent status of our clients. Whether it was a family facing eviction with no place else to go, or a single mother whose life savings were inappropriately garnished, I worked to find not just an effective legal solution, but a solution which was best for the client given their unique situation and pressures.

One notable case I had involved a young family with five children who lost everything when a tree fell on their manufactured home. Without insurance, this family was forced to survive on the kindness of the community. Knowing the stopgap provided by this generosity was not permanent, I worked directly with counsel for the mobile home park owner to expeditiously reach a settlement agreement that adequately compensated the family for their losses and mitigated the need for them to bear the added burden posed by litigation. Speaking with the family on a daily basis, I felt an immense personal investment in seeking a resolution to this matter. The absolute highlight of my summer came on my final day at CVLAS when an agreement was reached an hour before close of business, and I was able to witness the sense of relief on the mother's face when she came to our office to sign the agreement. Knowing that I played a direct role in this family acquiring the funds necessary to begin rebuilding after such a devastating loss was certainly one of the most affecting moments of my life.

On a daily basis I was humbled in my interactions with clients, as I discovered many had grown up in privileged environments similar to the ones myself and many law students were raised, but had suffered an unfortunate setback somewhere along the way through no fault of their own. The stories they told all shared a common thread: the desire to work hard and overcome the obstacles placed before them. This dedication to hard work was on full display when I stepped out of the office and joined the CVLAS Virginia Farm Workers Program on outreach trips to meet with migrant farm workers to, among other things, ensure they were receiving worker's compensation and that their living environment was safe and sanitary.

Thousands of miles from home, with the vast majority speaking little to no English, these isolated individuals were in a particularly vulnerable situation. To play a role in protecting them was beyond moving. This was made especially so after hearing countless stories from the workers about the families they were supporting back in their home countries with the fruits of their labor on these farms.

I cannot begin to express my gratitude to Equal Justice America and the donors who funded my grant. As a consequence of my time at CVLAS, I will enter practice with an intimate understanding of the influential role an attorney plays in the lives of clients; no matter how big or small, and rich or poor. I will also carry into my career a commitment of compassion, ensuring that I personally dedicate time to providing an access to justice to those who would otherwise go without. I look forward to contributing to your organization in the future so that the next generation of students is able to benefit from experiences like mine and clients can benefit from those students willing to devote their talents.

Thank you,

Samuel Yergin  
University of Virginia School of Law  
Class of 2018

LAW OFFICES  
**CENTRAL VIRGINIA LEGAL AID SOCIETY, INC.**

**CHARLOTTESVILLE OFFICE**

1000 PRESTON AVENUE, SUITE B • CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA 22903

EMAIL ADDRESS: [robin@cvlas.org](mailto:robin@cvlas.org)

OFFICE: (434)296-8851  
FAX: (434) 296-5731  
TOLL FREE: 1-800-868-1012

EXTENSION: 1444

August 16, 2016

Dan Ruben  
Executive Director  
Equal Justice America  
13540 E Boundary Rd.  
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben:

Central Virginia Legal Aid Society's Charlottesville office hosted University of Virginia School of Law 2L Sam Yergin as a legal intern this summer. As the office's senior managing attorney I oversaw Sam's work, which was focused primarily on landlord-tenant and consumer protection cases. Sam quickly proved himself to be an asset to our office, and greatly aided us in delivering legal services to the low-income and vulnerable clients we serve.

When a case was first presented to me by our intake staff, Sam would contact the necessary parties to develop a factual record. Subsequently, he would determine, research, and analyze any legal issues presented by the case and provide me with a plan as to how he believed we could best serve a client's needs. Following my review, Sam would act as my direct liaison to the client; he would articulate to them in plain language their options and any associated risk-reward tradeoff. Sam would continue to keep in contact with clients throughout their case to keep them abreast of any developments. I regularly received positive comments from our clients on how professionally and effectively Sam responded to their questions and concerns. In this regard, having Sam intern at our office allowed for us to provide exceptionally personalized service to our clients.

We were able to utilize Sam in trial preparation as well. I would task Sam with composing subpoena duces tecum and following up on the production of requested documents. Sam would evaluate responses to subpoenas and direct my attention to any pertinent information or issues which were raised. On several occasions, all involving especially tight deadlines, Sam had the opportunity to compose motions; which were submitted to the court after only very minor editing. Additionally, Sam would draft questions and conduct mock examinations of clients so they would have an idea of what to expect upon taking the witness stand. These drafts also served as an excellent starting point in my own trial preparation. Finally, Sam would ensure that our clients understood courtroom procedure and decorum.

Sam was an active participant in several settlement negotiations. His thorough understanding of each case allowed for us to make substantiated requests which would ultimately provide our clients with an appropriate remedy. On Sam's last day he negotiated with opposing

---



August 16, 2016

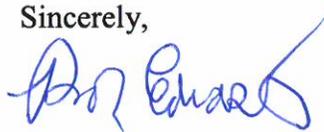
Page 2

counsel to settle a case in which our client's family had lost nearly all of their belongings when a tree fell on their home. Sam was able to quickly draft an agreement and track down the client to have her come sign the final document. Due to a particular set of extenuating circumstances, our client would likely have had to wait much longer before receiving any compensation had an agreement not been reached that day. Because of his work, this family will now have the money necessary to soon obtain permanent housing.

Outreach is another area in which Sam was able to contribute this summer. Sam assisted me in developing presentations to be given at monthly community luncheons with a goal of educating clients and civic organizations on subjects that disproportionately affect those who are low-income. He also joined our Virginia Farm Workers Program on trips across the state to meet with migrant workers. The purpose of such trips is to ensure that workers are aware of their rights under state and federal law, and that they have access to adequate housing and medical care.

Our office is grateful for Sam's hard work and commitment this summer, and especially for the funding which made his presence possible. We look forward to hosting more Equal Justice America Fellows in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Robin Edwards". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Robin Edwards