

Mr. Dan Ruben  
Executive Director  
Equal Justice America

Dear Mr. Ruben:

This summer, I worked in the Fulton County domestic relations unit at the Atlanta Legal Aid Society (“ALAS”) under the supervision of staff attorney Lori Anderson. To ease me into my responsibilities as an intern, the attorneys in domestic relations provided me with a binder of reading on family law in Georgia, and assigned me some short memoranda. Aside from the research, I had some less abstract tasks to keep me busy. Almost immediately, I began to sit in on client interviews with Ms. Anderson and her colleagues, and I went along with them to the Fulton County Courthouse when they had hearings.

Although I had worked before in a setting where I had direct client contact, the interactions I had with clients at ALAS were much more intense – one client in particular stands out to me. She was about 23 years old and had a young son. She came to the interview visibly terrified of her ex-boyfriend, who had been released from jail and was stalking her and damaging her property. In their prior relationship, he had been abusive and controlling toward our client. She said that he would monitor the time it took her to arrive home after work, and he would beat her, hitting her in the face and pulling her down the stairs by her hair. He was finally incarcerated when he pulled a gun on her mother. When he was released, he would follow her as she took public transit on her way home, and he would break the windows in her home, frightening her son. The final straw for our client was when her ex-boyfriend called in a bomb threat to her place of work. Although it was a false threat, she came to ALAS for a protective order. I interviewed her and drafted the documents needed to get the order, and it was incredibly satisfying to hear that her ex-boyfriend was incarcerated and denied bail.

There were many other clients with stories like this, vulnerable individuals both male and female, who had suffered abuse at the hands of spouses and caretakers. Although some of the conversations I had with them weighed heavily on me, I felt proud at the end of every week that I had participated, even in small ways, in helping the attorneys at ALAS get some measure of justice for them. Working with Ms. Anderson and her colleagues was an incredibly enriching learning experience. I have so much respect for the work that they do, and I understand that unfortunately it is often taken for granted by other attorneys and political leaders. This internship cemented my already strong desire to work in the public sector, and I was fortunate to observe the kind of character I would like to possess as a future attorney. I felt so lucky to receive the fellowship from Equal Justice America, and I am very grateful to have been chosen.

Sincerely,

Shelby Garland  
Cornell Law School  
JD Candidate, Class of 2019

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**VIA E-MAIL**

Mr. Dan Ruben

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Dear Mr. Ruben:

I write regarding the summer 2017 internship of Shelby Garland. Ms. Garland is a second-year law student at Cornell Law School. I was Ms. Garland's direct supervisor for the first half the summer, where she interned with the Atlanta Legal Aid Society.

The Atlanta Legal Aid Society provides free civil legal representation to indigent community members of the metropolitan Atlanta area. Ms. Garland interned with the Fulton County Family Law Division, where I have served as a staff attorney since 2014. Our office handles a wide range of family law matters such as divorce, child custody and legitimation, and child support cases. We prioritize cases involving intimate partner violence and child abuse.

In her role as an intern, Ms. Garland came into frequent direct contact with our clients, both in person and via phone. To aid attorneys in case evaluation, Ms. Garland called new client applicants to screen them for legal problems, and she presented their cases to our case acceptance committee. Ms. Garland was always prompt in returning client calls and thorough in her conversations with new applicants. She handled their cases with sensitivity and respect, and her commitment to helping survivors of violence attain safety and independence was evident.

Ms. Garland also completed research and writing assignments as-needed throughout the summer. Our office is in constant litigation, as all cases in Fulton County family court are scheduled for monthly status conferences before a judge. We often need very specific, short-term research projects to be completed. Ms. Garland reliably and thoroughly completed all research assignments. She was always glad to pitch in on a project, even at the last minute.

At Atlanta Legal Aid, full-time summer interns admitted to practice under Georgia's Student Practice Act have the opportunity to represent clients as lead counsel, under the supervision of an attorney. Through absolutely no fault of her own, Ms. Garland was unable to obtain Student Practice admission in time for the case we had selected for her. Despite that disappointment, Ms.

Garland still took the lead in hearing preparation. She interviewed the client in-person and prepped her for the hearing on her application for a Twelve Month Temporary Protective Order, which is Georgia's restraining order for victims of family violence. Ms. Garland drafted the direct and cross examinations, identified and prepared trial exhibits, and created a detailed timeline of the history of violence against our client. She attended court with me and observed negotiations with the incarcerated respondent, which took place in the court's inmate holding area.

I was impressed by the quality of Ms. Garland's work, her collaborative work ethic, and her professional, kind attitude. She seems very committed to helping indigent clients. It was a pleasure working with her and getting to know her. I am hopeful that she continues working in the public interest, and I look forward to seeing where her career takes her.

Sincerely,

/s/ Lori Anderson  
Attorney at Law