

Mr. Ruben:

I was able to help so many people thanks to my Equal Justice America Fellowship. Thank you so much. The money allowed me to move to Atlanta and live quite comfortably. It also enabled me to fulfill the mission of my sponsoring organization, Georgia Law Center for the Homeless, by doing things like taking homeless people out to lunch.

Inside the Law Center, two particular clients stand out when thinking about my summer – Rickey and Benjamin. The first gentleman comes to mind because of his physical appearance and brazen attitude. See, Rickey rolled in on a wheelchair operated by a joystick because both of his legs had been amputated. Quite understandably, Rickey was not always in the best of moods and would often call myself and others “Fool,” as he zoomed in and around desks and chairs. As I got to know Rickey, he took a liking to me and his attitude softened. We became friends and I went above and beyond to help him gain entry to the homeless shelter where he wanted to go.

After numerous attempts to contact the shelter, they finally notified me that a bed was open, via voicemail on a Friday afternoon while I was on lunch break. I called the shelter back as soon as I heard the news around 3 o'clock. The shelter receptionist explained to me that their intake hours had ended at 2 and that Rickey would have to wait until Monday. Through calculated legal advocacy, I convinced the receptionist to move her deadline to 4:30, but when I called Rickey, I learned that his wheelchair's battery had just died. There was no way, with the battery's charging time, that he would be able to make it.

This time, the receptionist would not budge. Nothing I said was going to change her mind. Rickey had to be there by 4:30, or sleep outside. I reluctantly delivered him the bad news.

I then called back to give it one final shot. I told the receptionist what I was forced to tell my client – that because he could not roll over to their shelter quickly enough, he would have to sleep outside the next three nights. I then faxed the shelter the requisite paperwork and left the office feeling defeated.

That next Monday, Rickey wheeled into the office again (to the chagrin of some of my colleagues) with a triumphant look on his face. He could not wait to tell me that he had been able to

stay in the shelter over the weekend. He was so happy that he gave me some of the incense he was selling on the streets to supplement his income. He would not take no for an answer. So I politely accepted and enjoyed our victory.

The second client's story is short and sweet. Benjamin came into the office seeking a birth certificate, but lacked the requisite voucher stating that a neighboring organization promised to pay for it. Ordinarily, we were not supposed to open a file if the potential client was lacking this voucher, but I decided to help him out anyway. I created an incomplete file and wrote a referral on official letterhead explaining that all of his documents were stolen, but that absent a voucher, we would be unable to complete his file to help him out.

The next day he came into my office in a great mood, waving his voucher left and right, exclaiming that I was an angel. The letter helped him cut the line to receive his voucher, and gain entry to a homeless shelter downtown. He insisted I give him a hug before exiting the office.

These experiences were only two of very many I could have written about. This summer provided me with invaluable experience that I could not have received without the help of Equal Justice America. While the above examples are more social work and less legal, I was also able to observe client-attorney meetings, mediations, and trials. I networked with local judges, public defenders, and private attorneys, wrote discovery requests and memos to prepare attorneys for client meetings and trial. I even installed a new network so that everyone could print wirelessly in the office. I certainly believe that I gained invaluable experience and provided quality work for the Georgia Law Center for the Homeless. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Sterling". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "S".

Eric Sterling

University of Georgia School of Law

Class of 2017

# EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA - Fellowship Questionnaire Summer 2015

**Part I** In the form of a 1-2 page(s) typed letter addressed to Dan Ruben, Executive Director at Equal Justice America, please summarize your Summer Fellowship experience. **MAKE SURE A SIGNIFICANT PART OF YOUR LETTER FOCUSES ON THE CLIENTS YOU SERVED, THEIR STORIES, HOW YOU WERE ABLE TO HELP THEM AND WHAT IT MEANT TO YOU** (Some of the letters we receive from EJA Fellowship recipients are used on our website, in our Annual Reports and are sent to donors and potential donors.) **Under your signature on the letter, please indicate your law school and anticipated year of graduation.**

**Part II** Please have your supervisor write a 1-2 page letter, also addressed to Dan Ruben, evaluating your fellowship. Your supervisor should send this letter to us separately by email.

**Part III** Please circle the answers to the questions below.

**YOUR COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE & LETTER MUST BE EMAILED BY AUGUST 31, 2015 TO:**

**KATIE@EQUALJUSTICEAMERICA.ORG**

**(Your supervisor should send his/her letter to the same email address.)**

1) How would you rate your overall Fellowship experience?

- a) Outstanding
  - b) Very worthwhile
  - c) Worthwhile
  - d) Fair
  - e) Disappointing
- Comments \_\_\_\_\_

2) In what areas of law does your organization primarily involve itself? You may circle more than one answer.

- a) Housing
- b) Public Benefits
- c) Family Law
- d) Immigration Law
- e) Children's rights
- f) Consumer Law
- g) Other

Comments Georgia Law Center for the Homeless primarily fights evictions. They also do child support, divorces, probate issues and social work like getting birth certificates.

3) Approximately how many clients did you serve during the course of your fellowship? 40

**REMINDER - PLEASE MAKE SURE A SIGNIFICANT PART OF YOUR LETTER FOCUSES ON ONE OR TWO OF THE CLIENTS YOU SERVED.**

4) Circle below the activities that best describe how you spent most of your time. You may circle more than one.

- a) Interviewed clients
  - b) Represented clients at Administrative Hearings
  - c) Research and writing
  - d) Community outreach
  - e) Ran errands
  - f) Other Legal/Social Work Advocacy, Outreach
- Comments I loved writing discovery requests.

5) How would you describe the quality of the supervision and training you received?

- a) Outstanding
- b) Very Good
- c) Fair
- d) Poor
- e) There was no supervision or training

Comments The staff attorneys were mostly willing to allow observance of every part of the attorney-client advice process.

6) Has your experience affected the likelihood of your pursuing a career in poverty law or some other area of public interest law?

- a) I am now completely committed to a career in public interest law.
- b) I am more likely to pursue a public interest law career.
- c) The experience had no effect on my likelihood of pursuing a public interest law career.
- d) I am less likely to pursue a public interest law career.
- e) There is no way I will ever work in the public interest again.

Comments I think I would rather work private now, but then own/support my own non-profit organizations and help them run most efficiently.

7) Is there anything that could have been done by Equal Justice America or by your sponsoring organization to improve your fellowship?

The organizations could have been more willing to do non-legal outreach to the homeless such as providing meals or temporary housing.

Name Eric Sterling  
Legal Services Organization Georgia Law Center for the Homeless

Law School University of Georgia  
Date 8/17/2015



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August 31, 2015

Mr. Dan Ruben  
Equal Justice America  
Via Email

**Re: Eric Sterling Fellowship Evaluation**

Dear Mr. Ruben:

This letter is to confirm that Eric Sterling was a legal fellow with Georgia Law Center for the Homeless for the summer of 2015.

The Georgia Law Center for the Homeless (GLCH) is a non-profit organization that provides legal representation to individuals who are experiencing homelessness in civil judicial and administrative proceedings. The GLCH staffs attorneys and social workers in its efforts to provide a holistic approach of care to assist individuals in ending homelessness. The GLCH also performs significant community outreach to make its services available by visiting homeless shelters, transitional housing communities, and by partnering with other agencies, including the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to quickly address the legal needs of homeless individuals and assist them in obtaining access to public benefits.

Specifically, The GLCH areas of practice include: eviction defense, including public housing terminations, temporary protective orders in cases of domestic violence, child support and custody cases, wage claims and social security disability claims. In addition, GLCH provides assistance in ensuring that homeless youth are able to have equal access to education and housing.

As legal fellow, Eric provided assistance day to day operations at the GLCH. To name a few, Eric assisted with intake every week of his fellowship. This included interviewing potential clients and spotting issues to develop a presentation of the potential client to attorneys in order to determine in what capacity the GLCH would be able to assist the potential client. Moreover, Eric participated in community outreach at homeless shelters, where he met with individuals experiencing homelessness to reduce barriers to our services to individuals who are disabled and lack transportation or financial means to come to our office for intake.

In addition, Eric had the opportunity to be a part of the daily practice of law at the GLCH. Eric assisted attorneys with case management. Under the supervision of attorneys, Eric corresponded with clients throughout his fellowship and assisted attorneys in factual investigation. He also researched and drafted legal pleadings

under attorney supervision to be filed in furtherance of the client's objectives. For example, Eric assisted attorneys in preparing discovery and reviewing evidence in preparation for trial. Moreover, Eric attended judicial proceedings with attorneys on a weekly basis. In particular, Eric shadowed attorneys in trials related to evictions and temporary protective orders. He also attended mediations on a weekly basis, and was had the unique opportunity to network and meet other attorneys and judges in the Metro Atlanta area.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss additional perspective on Eric Sterling's fellowship with the GLCH. Should you wish to contact me, please do not hesitate to reach me at (404) 681-0680 extension 214 or via email at [jcorrea@galawcenter.org](mailto:jcorrea@galawcenter.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JC', written over a horizontal line.

Joel Correa, Esq.