

July 28, 2009

Dear Mr. Ruben:

I would like to thank you for the chance to serve as a fellow for Equal Justice America this summer. My experience at the Legal Aid Justice Center in Petersburg, Virginia has been very fulfilling and worthwhile. I have had the chance to work with a dedicated, caring, and knowledgeable group of lawyers who truly devote all their energy towards making a difference. I unfortunately will not be able to recount all the encouraging stories that arose this summer, but I would like to focus on two instances that stood out.

One of my favorite experiences from this summer was when I served as a makeshift translator. One of our clients, who we will call "Ms. Orinsky," does not have a full command of the English language. She has been taking English classes in the little spare time that she has between working full time and raising her child as a single parent. Whenever she would come into the office, I would try to supplement her English with my tattered Spanish. I know a small amount of Spanish on account of online courses I took prior to going to Spain last summer. Although my knowledge of her language was miniscule, she was overjoyed that I was trying to help her overcome the language barrier. I believe it was the gesture rather than the actual service I provided that truly brought comfort to the client.

I also have had the chance to work on an immigration case this summer. "Ms. O'Leary" contacted our office in hopes that we would be able to assist her in obtaining a copy of her green card. The process, as anyone who is knowledgeable of it can attest, is very circuitous and confusing. Ms. O'Leary's situation was extraordinarily complicated by various facts specific to her situation. In addition, she had multiple goals that she wanted to attain. It is partly because of her confusing situation that Ms. O'Leary would blurt out all of her problems in a non-stop stream whenever a question was asked of her. I was eventually able to sift through all the information to find all the information I needed to help her reach her goals. Through a few internet searches, telephone calls to various agencies, and inquiring emails I was able to solve her quandaries. Ms. O'Leary is exceptionally grateful for the assistance I have given her, and expresses this every time we cross paths.

In both of the situations outlined above, I performed simple tasks that did not take an extraordinary amount of effort or time, but rendered a needed service to the client. In both situations, I have been impressed with the gratitude expressed by the client. Many indigent segments of our society feel that the laws, and lawyers in general, are not on their side. It is a truly heartening experience when a client realizes that there are attorneys who will aid their cause and represent them zealously. I cannot overstate how impressed I have been with the professionalism with the attorneys in my office. I thank them for their time and willingness to impart knowledge upon the interns. I would also like to thank the generosity of Equal Justice America for attracting me to the legal aid experience. Your thoughtfulness has opened my eyes to a career path, which I admittedly had not previously considered.

Thank you for a wonderful experience,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Myron D. McClees". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

Myron D. McClees
William & Mary School of Law, Class of 2010