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Summer 2022 EJA Fellow:



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Update 1: After finishing my 1L year, I'm interning at the Children's Law Center (CLC) of New York and was generously offered an Equal Justice America (EJA) fellowship to fund my summer. This is my first of several EJA Fellow Updates, and I'm happy to say my summer is off to a good start! Interning at CLC's Appellate/Writing Unit has already taught me a great deal about legal research and writing, and I feel lucky to be paired with excellent writing mentors. My first assignment was to research a standing issue for non-adoptive, non-biological, former partners in same-sex relationships who later seek custody or visitation of children who were born or adopted during their partnership. After delving into New York statutes and case law over the past few weeks, yesterday I submitted a legal memo exploring the current state of New York's approach to standing. Up next, I will be researching New York's Civil Practice Law and Rules (CPLR) as applied to a family law issue and look forward to brushing up on my first semester Civil Procedure knowledge. After spending two weeks sifting through emotional and tumultuous custody and visitation cases, I am excited to take a breather with some CPLR research.

Update 2: Hello all! I have taken on several projects at The Children's Law Center within the past few weeks. First, I have been sifting through issues of New York civil procedure (mentioned in my last post). More recently, I was lucky enough to see my memo's cases and legal arguments on same-sex parents applied in a full-fledged summation, which I spot edited for my supervisor. Last week, I spent time reading through abuse and neglect cases for a soon-to-be-filed order to show cause. Additionally, I am starting to digest testimony from a custody case while also beginning to delve into another case's evidentiary issues. All to say, I am staying busy!

I was invited to a Kings County Family Court LGBTQ+ event in which Lambda Legal's Omar Gonzalez Pagan was the keynote speaker. The event, which coincidentally happened the day that the Supreme Court overturned Roe in the Dobbs decision, was a moving discussion of Supreme Court case law relevant to LGBTQ+



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Americans, most of which was familiar from my Constitutional Law and Reproductive Rights and Justice classes at University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School.

I also had the opportunity to shadow a trial attorney at the Integrated Domestic Violence (IDV) Court. Witnessing the intersection of criminal charges and family court issues was heavy and keenly demonstrative of the ways in which our criminal legal systems disenfranchise individuals and enforce family separations. This experience has helped me reaffirm my commitment to public interest law and I look forward to applying the skills I am gaining in the family law context to my future work.

Update 3: I have spent the past couple weeks wrapping up the civil procedure question I was assigned and continuing to digest testimony from the custody case I am working on. In reading through the parents' testimony, it is really striking how much emphasis the family court places on the minutiae of parenting when deciding issues of custody and visitation. Parents' abilities to balance all the tasks of caring for their families are dissected in detail, and the standard appears very high, given how difficult parenting can be.

Next, I will be writing my first motion for submission to court. Though I drafted motions at my last immigration firm, this will be my first opportunity to write one from scratch!

Update 4: I have spent most of the past couple weeks at The Children's Law Center sifting through and digesting testimony, as well as wrapping up a motion for submission to court. My supervisor provided a lot of useful feedback on the motion, and I am happy to say that it is ready for court! I also had the opportunity to shadow in IDV court again, witnessing a variety of cases for the second time.

In other news, I have decided to transfer to New York University School of Law for the coming year. It was a difficult decision, but feels like the right thing for me, both personally and professionally. Thank you to my community and to Equal Justice America for the support this summer!

Update 5: On the whole, I was lucky to have a fruitful and engaging 1L summer internship experience. I am very grateful for the hands-on mentorship and guidance I received from both of my supervisors. They allowed me a lot of freedom in my working style while making a point to meet with me each week and provide extensive feedback. The motion that I drafted, which was eventually filed in court, went through two rounds of major edits. I'm happy to say that I feel much more confident in both my legal research and writing skills.

There were several highlights to my 2022 summer internship experience. I am proud of the first memo I wrote, which explored the current state of New York standing requirements for same-sex, non-biological and non-adoptive parents. Due to both New York and CLC's citation requirements, I had to learn some new legal citation rules along the way, and I think I adapted well. I also walked away from the memo with an entirely new pool of niche legal knowledge.



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Though researching the civil procedure question was tedious at times, I felt proud of the time and attention I put into that research, and my supervising attorney kindly provided me afterward with a detailed description of the ways she would use several of the cases I had found to support her argument. This assignment was instrumental for me in honing my statutory research skills, and my organizational skills have improved, as well.

Perhaps the most impactful experience this summer, though, was when I was assigned hundreds of pages testimony to digest for my supervisor. This was a basic custody case in which the parties went back and forth for months regarding their respective work schedules. Reading through each parent's narrative, this assignment illuminated the minute detail in which courts dissect family lives, and the high standards that parents are held to when under scrutiny.

In all, I am grateful for all I gained at CLC: I am walking away not only with improved research and writing skills, but also with valuable relationships with my superiors. With my recent decision to transfer to NYU, a lot of things in my life have been in flux. The opportunity to work with a strong, dedicated legal team in the city where I now live, while enjoying the flexibility that writing and appellate work affords, created a fantastic and low-stress summer internship experience before beginning a new chapter in my legal education. Thanks to EJA for helping make this possible.