

October 5, 2023

Equal Justice America

Dear Dan Ruben:

This summer, I was fortunate to receive an Equal Justice America Fellowship to help fund my public interest summer internship. I worked at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. on the litigation team in New York City on a variety of important social justice and civil rights issues that are the reason I wanted to become a lawyer in the first place. Throughout the summer, I gained immeasurable experience that not only expanded my practical skills, but reminded me why I came to law school and reinvigorated my passion for becoming a lawyer and defending the marginalized. My work this summer confirmed my desire to work in civil rights impact litigation through the incredible relationships and mentorships I formed, and, most importantly, the inspiring work that I was able to be a part of.

At NAACP Legal Defense Fund, I was assigned to multiple projects across their varying practice areas. The most time consuming and high profile case I was involved in was the voting rights case *Milligan v. Allen*, wherein I helped the team in the remedial stage of the proceedings with legal research and writing about precedential remedies, and drafted or assisted with the drafting of public letters, stipulations, responses to court inquiries, and briefs. Notably, I was given the opportunity to travel with the *Milligan* team twice to both Mobile and Birmingham, Alabama for congressional committee meetings and court hearings. Beforehand, I helped prepare the lead attorneys for depositions and for the court hearings themselves. While there, I was able to meet with the Plaintiffs in the case, as well as other community members and organizers who were passionate about voting rights.

I also worked on two education cases. The first was a now decades-long LDF case wherein I reviewed and analyzed district data, conducted research for a substantive memo, and attended status conferences with the school district. My other education case was in the investigatory stage, and required that I research and investigate academic freedom and the First Amendment in higher education. Finally, I worked on nationwide Fourth Amendment research for the criminal justice team.

Gaining such worthwhile experience in multiple areas of law, and across multiple phases of litigation—from pre-litigation, to a well-established ongoing case, to just after a big win and in the remedial stage—taught me an immense amount about what it means to be a civil rights litigator. I had high hopes going in since LDF was my dream job for the summer (and future, for that matter), and every one of them was exceeded tenfold.

I am grateful to Equal Justice America for providing me with this fellowship to help students like me do the work we are truly passionate about doing, alleviating some of the hesitancy that comes from financial constraints. With this fellowship, I was able to focus less on my finances, and more on becoming the best lawyer I can be and having the most fulfilling summer internship experience. It is encouraging to know that organizations like Equal Justice America are there to support public interest law students in our pursuits.

Sincerely,

Joelle Miller

*Summer 2023 Fellowship Recipient*