

August 27, 2013

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America

Dear Mr. Ruben,

Being able to work at Columbus Community Legal Services (CCLS) in the Advocacy for the Elderly (AFE) Clinic this summer was an extremely rewarding experience. Getting the position as a 1L who had never participated in the Clinic before was a privilege, but also quite intimidating at first. I wasn't sure exactly what to expect when I began the job, but I had heard that student attorney's and interns at CCLS were allowed to step into the role of the attorney and conduct all of the day to day tasks expected of a lawyer at a firm. Without having any other practical legal experience, I was up for a challenge and in for a great summer.

When first arriving at CCLS I was given 8 cases that had been transferred from spring semester students. Right away I had to get caught up to speed with case history and what needed to be done for each client. During the first few weeks I was a little overwhelmed, but once I became acclimated with my cases, the office, and my co-workers things began to run smoothly.

Initially, I spoke with or met all of my clients and began where the last student attorney's had left off. I attended a hearing and participated in a settlement negotiation with opposing counsel during my fourth week on the job, and was able to use the settlement agreement that I had drafted. While dealing with an extremely complex Estate Administration case, I have had the opportunity to draft and file motions and accounts with the Probate Court, handle a forgotten Estate Inheritance Tax issue, and research and write a legal memorandum.

My other cases have afforded me the opportunity to draft a FOIA request and appeal to the Mayor, edit a Qualified Domestic Relations Order and submit a motion for its approval, assist in researching for an Amicus Curiae Brief regarding the voluntary acknowledgment of paternity, and draft and execute a will. Each one of these tasks I had never done before, but with the help of my supervising attorney guiding me in the right direction, I was able to accomplish them all. As a student intern I significantly improved my communication skills through all of the client interaction and phone calls for case related matters. Throughout the summer I received a few new cases where I conducted intake interviews completely on my own. I had to prepare, ask the right questions to gather enough information to determine whether or not we could take the case, and develop an initial relationship with each prospective client.

The complex Estate Administration case (mentioned above) took up a majority of my time working at CCLS and I would like to focus a little more on the issues that arose throughout the summer regarding this case. Our client's mother was originally the client of CCLS and came to us in 2004 seeking help in the administration of her parents' estates. Since then, our original client passed as well as our original client's brother, leaving the clinic with an additional two estates to manage. Our client, the personal representative of all 4 estates has been working for years trying to settle the 4 intestate estates. Unfortunately, in many family matters there always seems to be one bad egg in the family who constantly wishes to make matters more difficult.

This person, for us, was one of the beneficiaries of one of the estates. He had previously served time in prison and although he has a very large victims' compensation lien against him and will not receive anything from disbursements of the estates, he and his attorney have fought

the administration of the estates from the beginning. Another interesting issue that I had to deal with throughout the summer was that his attorney had recently received a 2 year suspension from practicing in D.C. and had appealed the decision. In July the suspension was confirmed, which led to possible issues appearing from her representation of her client.

Estate administration is an extremely complex area of the law and requires many administrative rules to be followed. Because I was dealing with the administration of four different interconnected estates it was imperative to keep everything straight. My first day I received a delinquency notice stating that a deadline for one of the estates had been missed. Right from the start I had to delve into the rules and statutes to figure out what needed to be done and how to remedy the problem. Our client, was so helpful, always trying to get everything we needed as quickly as she could. These estates have turned into her nightmare and each time we met I could see how tired she was of dealing with the problems that arose at each step. Every time we thought we were getting close, something would get in our way. Unfortunately, although I made great strides towards closing out these estates, there is still work that needs to be done before they actually can be closed. I also anticipate more issues from the problem family member, but hope, for our client's sake that we have heard the last of him.

Overall, it was great to help my many clients and felt amazing when on my last day, one of my client's called and asked for me to keep her updated with my job after graduation because she wanted to recommend me to all her friends. Working for people who don't have much, if anything, you really get to make a difference in their lives. Legal issues arise every day and it was great knowing I could help a few people with solving their problems. CCLS was an amazing experience and I am hoping to be able to work there again during one of my upcoming semesters.

Sincerely,



Amanda Azarian
The Catholic University of America
Columbus School of Law
Anticipated Graduation-May 2015

23 August 2013

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
Building II - Suite 204
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben:

It is with the greatest of pleasure that I write to you to tell of the achievements of Amanda Azarian who served her Equal Justice America Fellowship under my direction this summer.

I am an assistant clinical professor of law at the Columbus School of Law of the Catholic University of America and the supervising attorney for our Advocacy For the Elderly free legal clinic. Ms. Azarian served as a full time law student intern from May 20 through August 16.

Ms. Azarian got assigned all our nightmare cases that built up over the past year, including our notorious "Probate Case From Hell" (five probates, three jurisdictions, an heir in prison, an opposing counsel suspended from the bar, et cetera and so forth). Nothing shook her. Nothing was too complicated or too stressful. All of her clients loved her, except for the one who hung up on her when she tried to explain to her that she didn't have a case. If I gave her assignment, I knew it would be done correctly, done thoroughly and done ahead of deadline. If I had the chance, I would rehire this person in a heartbeat.

Thank you and your organization for funding her fellowship this summer. Keep up the good work. Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Michael McGonnigal