

Paul C. Taylor
4L, Evening Program
Wayne State University Law School

September 11, 2014

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America

Mr. Ruben,

I am writing to tell you about my experiences working as a Student Attorney at the Free Legal Aid Clinic (FLAC) in Detroit, Michigan beginning in January of 2014. First, let me tell you something about FLAC.

Since 1965, FLAC has been providing no-fee legal representation to low-income residents of Wayne County, Michigan. FLAC is affiliated with the Wayne State University Law School. It is run by an elected board composed of WSU Law School students, and our legal work is supervised by attorneys Michael Kwarcinski and Sonya Bellafant. The Student Attorneys are allowed to appear in Court under supervision pursuant to the Michigan Court Rules. We provide family law legal services to low-income residents of Wayne County under the auspices of Lakeshore Legal Aid, and a range of other legal services to low-income Wayne County residents who are over the age of sixty under the auspices of the Neighborhood Legal Services of Michigan. The Student Attorneys conduct intake interviews, provide information and legal advice after consultation with our supervising attorneys, maintain client contact, draft and file Court pleadings, appear in Court on behalf of the client, conduct negotiations, any other client-related work, and conduct the everyday administrative functions of FLAC. The Student Attorneys may receive academic credit, work/study funds, or Public Interest Fellowships such as what is offered by Equal Justice America.

I am sincerely grateful for the support that Equal Justice America has afforded me in my work at FLAC. My time spent there has been greatly rewarding, and I hope it has made a positive difference in the lives of our clients.

Now I would like to relate to you a memorable account regarding one of our clients. For confidentiality purposes, I will refer to this client as "Susan". Years ago, Susan had met a man and had fallen in love, and thought he felt the same way about her, so they were married. Unfortunately, this man very soon became abusive toward Susan in many ways. She was forced to flee for her safety, and spent the next few years in fear as he tried to maintain contact with her, even when she moved. Finally, Susan became very ill, and so was concerned that her husband might be able to make decisions for her should she become incapacitated. By September of 2013, she had resolved to divorce her husband, hoping to put all the unpleasantness behind her. However, Susan was unable to work due to her illness, and so had no money to pay for an attorney to represent her, had no knowledge of the legal system, and her illness often left her feeling discouraged. That was when she contacted the Free Legal Aid Clinic for help.

Legal help was certainly necessary in Susan's case, for her husband was determined that she would not be able to divorce him. He persisted in contacting and locating her, but took steps to ensure that he could not be located. This strategy was initially successful, as Susan's first divorce case was dismissed because she was unable to locate and serve her husband with the divorce complaint and summons. However, through the experienced supervision of Attorney Mike Kwarcinski, hours spent in public records searches, legal research, pleading drafting, and filings with the Court, we were able to locate him at the home of another woman, and accomplish service of summons by alternate means. This meant that Susan's divorce could move forward. Then, her husband's strategy worked against him, as his refusal to participate meant that she would be granted a default judgment of divorce, and would never have to see him again.

The day we appeared in Court with Susan to finalize her divorce is something that will stay with me for a while, if not forever. Despite the years of disappointment and grief, when she gave her testimony to the Judge that her marriage was over, there were tears. Then, out in the hallway, the tears turned to relief and even happiness as she hugged Mike and me. Then Susan left the Court, a free woman.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Sincerely,
Paul C. Taylor
Student Attorney
Practicing pursuant to MCR 8.120

September 18, 2014

RE: PAUL TAYLOR - EJA FELLOWSHIP EVALUATION

Dear Dan Ruben,

I am the supervising attorney for the Free Legal Aid Clinic, and oversaw Mr. Taylor during his fellowship.

I was very impressed by Mr. Taylor's performance throughout this fellowship. Mr. Taylor was the epitome of professionalism, arriving early and staying late each day to ensure that his work was completed. I knew I could unequivocally trust him to complete any assigned task with the minimum of oversight.

Further, Mr. Taylor's legal work was outstanding. He consistently produced meticulously - researched and well-written legal pleadings. He was always extensively prepared for court dates, and handled the ebb and flow of family law hearings with ease.

Mr. Taylor also had an exceptional manner with clients, putting them at ease with his thorough explanations and empathic approach. This was especially impressive considering that our clients were often going through traumatic situations.

In short, I could not be happier with the job Mr. Taylor did. He embodied his Equal Justice America Fellowship, and positively impacted many clients' lives as a result.

Should you wish to hear more on Mr. Taylor, feel free to contact me at (313) 833-0058 +222, or via email at mkwarcinski@lakeshorelegalaid.org. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Michael Kwarcinski
Free Legal Aid Clinic Supervising Attorney