

# Tami A. Martin

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August 30, 2009

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

Thank you so much for your support. The funds I received from Equal Justice America this past summer allowed me to take a full-time unpaid internship with DC Law Students in Court (DCLSIC), an opportunity I would probably not have been able to pursue otherwise.

Earlier this summer, I wrote an email to my family, updating them on my life. DCLSIC took up most of the email, which said:

“Amazingly, my time at DCLSIC (D.C. Law Students in Court) is coming to an end. Before the program started, I was not excited about the idea of more property all summer long, but I'm extremely grateful for everything I've learned here. DCLSIC's Civil Division does mostly housing (landlord-tenant) law, as well as some consumer law and small claims. In D.C.'s Landlord Tenant Court, 90% of landlords have attorneys and only 3% of tenants do. In an effort to close this gap, DCLSIC only represents tenants, and beyond that, only those tenants who fall below a certain percentage of the federal poverty guidelines and would not be able to hire counsel. DCLSIC trains and supervises third year law students who are given full responsibility for a caseload, from beginning to end. The younger students (2Ls, second years) like me do a lot of the same things as 3Ls, but we don't have temporary bar cards and can't make appearances in Court.

“One thing 2Ls do that the 3Ls do not typically do is intake (talking to people who come in for help, figuring out what their problems are, and working with a supervisor to figure out what, if anything, we can do for them). Intake is an invaluable, though often infuriating, experience. Each 2L does intake in the office once or twice a week and in court once a week. We see all different kinds of people with all different kinds of problems. Most are African-American or Latino D.C. residents, many are on public assistance, many are women with young children, and some have mental and/or physical disabilities. Some are exceedingly grateful for any help we can give them, while others are not. Working with such a variety of people is an experience I hear many fellow students haven't gotten during their summer job.

“Beyond intake, I've written answers and counterclaims, fully briefed amended answers, motions to dismiss, letters to landlords, affidavits of service, writs of attachment, too many advice letters than I'd like to count, subpoenas, and a fully briefed motion to vacate a \$13,000 judgment which it turned out I could not deliver because the potential client acquired counsel he never told us about until the brief was finished. I've investigated apartments, including one with a bedbug, cockroach, and rodent infestation like you would not believe. You can bet I bought a few roach motels when I got home that night. Sometimes our efforts save apartments and houses from

being lost. Sometimes we can't provide anything but peace of mind when people are confused about what is happening to them. I work 35-40 hours a week, and there still doesn't seem to be enough time to get everything done."

While it was difficult, both emotionally and mentally, working at DCLSIC gave me insight into the vast needs of those people society often most readily forgets. It showed me that there are strong people in the world willing to fight for the invisible, and that you don't need a thick wallet to have a big heart.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Tami A. Martin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tami A. Martin  
American University Washington College of Law, 2011