

August 30, 2010

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

Dear Mr. Ruben:

As a recipient of the Equal Justice America Fellowship, I was able to work with the Virginia Legal Aid Society in the Danville, Virginia office for ten weeks this past summer. This internship was especially rewarding, as it provided me with invaluable legal experience within the context of community service.

First and foremost, this internship afforded me the opportunity to enhance my legal research and writing skills. From day one, my superiors allowed me to work independently on several key cases. Specifically, I researched various state and Federal legal issues, including bankruptcy claims, commercial law, landlord-tenant disputes, car warranties, Medicaid eligibility, guardianship court orders, and Federal Truth-in-Lending claims. As a result, I cultivated an ability to effectively understand and apply both statutory language and case precedent.

I most enjoyed my involvement with claims against the Virginia Employment Commission. Throughout the summer, I represented several clients in appeals to the Commission for unemployment benefits. These hearings, which were conducted telephonically, allowed me to develop litigation skills that will surely prove beneficial at all levels of my career. Moreover, the summer culminated with my preparing a formal brief to the Virginia Employment Commission, which was utilized in a final appeal for unemployment benefits. After writing the brief, I was able to travel with the staff attorney as she made the oral argument in front of the Commission. As a result of this work, I have developed a burgeoning interest in Labor and Employment law.

Moreover, I was afforded the opportunity to engage with a diverse clientele, which inevitably enhanced my interpersonal abilities. As part of the weekly in-take process, I met with several potential clients regarding their various legal problems. From these interviews, I developed the ability to quickly identify the presence of potential legal issues. However, most importantly, these client interactions reminded me of the unique position lawyers play in the lives of all citizens. Not only were these individuals in need of legal services, but also many of our clients desperately wanted an opportunity just to talk about their situation and acquire advice from someone willing to listen. Finally, it was especially rewarding to provide these legal services to residents of my home community of Danville, Virginia—a region devastated by recent economic hardships.

Through both the supportive environment at the Virginia Legal Aid Society and the funding provided by the Equal Justice America Fellowship, I leave this summer with a whole set of invaluable skills. However, most importantly, I remain cognizant of the pivotal impact legal professionals can have in the life of all citizens. As a result, I go forward with a true sense of humility for the difference I made this past summer and I remain hopeful for the impact I can have throughout the course of my career.

Sincerely,

Tyler S. Laughinghouse

Washington and Lee University School of Law, c/o 2012

September 3, 2010

Mr. Dan Ruben

Equal Justice American Fellowship

RE: Tyler Laughinghouse's Summer Fellowship

Dear Mr. Ruben:

Tyler worked with our office for ten weeks this summer. During the ten weeks, he interviewed clients, did legal research, drafted legal memorandum, and represented clients at administrative hearings. On occasion, he was also used to investigate facts and to serve papers.

I can truly say that Tyler was a tremendous asset to our office this summer. He fit in well and was very enthusiastic about his duties.

Thank you for your program. If you have any further questions about Tyler's work with us this summer, feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

VIRGINIA LEGAL AID SOCIETY, INC.

Greg Hairston
Managing Attorney

μ § Offices in: Danville Emporia Farmville Lynchburg Suffolk

Free legal advice and information at 1-866-LegalAid (534-5243)
& legal information at and

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Pittsylvania, Franklin-Southampton
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