

August 27, 2012

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I'm incredibly grateful to you and everyone associated with Equal Justice America for making both of my law school summers rewarding and productive. Last summer, a grant from EJA allowed me to work as an intern at the Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis. Touched by the sheer number of victims of housing discrimination that I was able to help, I decided to use my 2L summer break to similarly serve the underprivileged. Thus, when I was offered the chance to work with Marie Kenyon at Catholic Legal Assistance Ministry in St. Louis, I accepted without hesitation.

My internship with CLAM was both eye-opening and productive. CLAM is an incredibly industrious clinic, as they advise and represent over 1,000 clients every year in domestic and immigration cases. Marie, my advisor, allowed me to work on over 50 cases over the course of the summer in varying capacities. Each one was memorable. My first involved a mother whose three-year-old daughter presented with severe bruising. Because she was suspicious that the daughter's father inflicted the contortions, the mother filed an order of protection to prevent him from contacting the child. As the guardians ad litem, our office was charged with protecting the interests of the child. After speaking with both parents and hearing their accounts of why the bruises appeared on the little girl, we made our recommendation. Ultimately, we believed that the father presented a danger, and the judge ordered that the child be protected for a year.

In that case, and many of my subsequent cases, I was able to represent our clients in court under Missouri Supreme Court Rule 13. Speaking in front of judges and lawyers was incredibly nerve-racking, but the intense need that our clients had for justice impelled me to push those feelings aside. And, by the end of the summer, I became an exceptional advocate. For example, one of my last cases was a contested divorce where the parties agreed on everything except the amount of child support that the husband had to pay to the wife. Essentially, the husband believed the number that we were asking for was oppressively high. So, I conducted direct and cross-examination, ultimately convincing the judge that our client was entitled to our proposed amount. The husband's argument was that because the money he made from commissions was inconsistent from paycheck to paycheck, the court should have low-balled his support obligation. I was proud that I was able to successfully use my powers of persuasion to debunk that argument. Moreover, this internship put me into contact with exceptional and inspiring public servants. My supervisor, Marie Kenyon, started working at the clinic over 20 years ago and has since put in an eye-popping amount of hours into the endeavor. Her work ethic, patience with law students and clients, and larger-than-life presence were an inspiration

to me. Not only did my time at CLAM instill in me technical skills of lawyering, but it also provided a model of what type of advocate that I strive to become.

Thank you Mr. Ruben for giving me this opportunity. I promise that I'll make the Equal Justice America name proud as I make the transition from law student to lawyer.

Sincerely,

Daniel Lawder
University of Michigan
Class of 2013