

Wednesday, August 16, 2017

Mr. Dan Ruben

First, thank you for the opportunity and support. Now, how do I summarize my experience in two short pages? Legal Services [of Eastern Michigan] was an experiential experience that I will eternally be grateful for. I worked predominantly in family law. The family law attorneys I worked with did the basic family law cases, they were responsible for intake (interviewing all potential clients regardless of the area of law) as well as criminal expungements.

My first client was a lady who had her bank card stolen and it was used to make fraudulent on-line purchases. I called the client, set up an appointment and our first appointment lasted almost 90 minutes. We had tried calling Direct Express who would not refund her money despite her having filed a police report. Little did I know that our first appointment would be only the beginning. For the next two months, I spoke to this client at least twice a week, she and I along with an attorney were calling regularly to get her issue resolved. When I realized I was not getting anywhere on my own, I called Representative Dan Kildee's office to see if there was anything they could do as it was a Social Security account with Direct Express and it seemed people all over the country were having similar issues. The Rep's office could not do much either and we eventually got our client in touch with a Pro Bono attorney. Unfortunately, as of today, I have no update on this case but the client promised to call our office once it was resolved. She was thankful for all the work I put in and even though I could not solve her problem, helping her navigate solutions was really rewarding.

Another memorable case I worked on was for a lady who came into our office, she desperately wanted a divorce from her husband who was in jail for CSC, he had sexually assaulted her daughter (his stepdaughter) and the girl was so traumatized that she attempted to commit suicide. When our client came in she was broken, her daughter was in a mental facility on suicide watch. Our office usually does not do direct representation on divorces, but an attorney asked me if I would go to court on this lady's behalf. I drew up the paperwork quickly and filed everything with the court. The hard part would come in trying to serve her husband in jail. I walked to the jail three times trying to get her husband served. I was turned away and told I need a process server or court order. I walked to the clerk's office at the court house and was told I needed a process server. A prominent family law attorney overheard me in the clerk's office trying to explain my situation and spoke to my supervising attorney about it. They discussed that our clients are unable to pay for process servers because they are low income. That prominent attorney went to the jail and demanded that they

serve documents for our clients and was promised that they would. A week later, I took that walk again and asked a policeman at the jail to serve someone. I had to beg and plead and explain my situation, I was determined to not leave until I got him served. I eventually did get him served and was able to call my client and let her know that he was served. She was relieved and thankful. I felt so accomplished, I just wanted to make this lady's life easier so she could focus on her daughter. And because of her case, our office will be able to serve others in the county jail at no cost to our clients.

I worked with clients to get their criminal records set-aside. It is wonderful to see people walk out of the court house after a judge grants a set-aside order. The opportunities that become available for work and studying for these people are life changing. One young lady had a retail fraud conviction, it was 6 years old and she had since started a family but was unable to get a steady job because of her record. Once the judge signed her order, her eyes lit up and she told us what it meant for her future, it had held her back from getting into nursing school. She was just one of a few clients we helped with expungements this summer.

I worked on numerous ROPA cases (Revocation of Paternity), the most challenging one I have faced walked into the office two weeks ago. Cl. has a one month old baby, bio dad is deceased and the presumed (legal) father is currently in jail for premeditated homicide (he murdered the bio dad). There is no case law or anything in the statute that addresses a deceased bio dad. I drafted the motion with some help from one of the attorneys in my office. I had emailed my professor and the attorneys in my office reached out to other attorneys for guidance, but no-one has dealt with this situation. ROPA has not been around very long. It will be my mission to work on this case and ensure that the presumed legal dad's name will not remain on the child's birth certificate. The young lady I am helping has expressed her gratitude for our help.

I have worked with many clients, drafted so many motions and have been at the court house on average twice a week filing documents or sitting in on hearings. It has been an absolute pleasure to work at legal services and serve the underrepresented in our community. It was an experience that changed and humbled me. I went home every day exhausted, but happy with what I had accomplished for the day. I love people, I love helping people and I believe that I have a future in public interest law.

Kind Regards, Stacy Olivier
Michigan State University College of Law
May 2019



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August 28, 2017

VIA EMAIL

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America

Re: Equal Justice Fellowship for Michigan State University Law Student Stacy Olivier

Dear Mr. Ruben:

We had the pleasure of hosting Michigan State University Law Student Stacy Olivier this past summer at Legal Services of Eastern Michigan (LSEM). Thank you for providing Stacy with the opportunity of serving as an Equal Justice Fellow. She was a tremendous asset to our organization.

We have a fast-paced office in downtown Flint, Michigan, and we often have clients with emergency legal needs. Our office handles a variety of civil matters, including cases pertaining to housing, employment, family law, elder law, bankruptcy/collection, public benefits, probate, and other general civil cases. Stacy worked with a number of the LSEM attorneys on different legal issues that ranged from simple collection matters to complicated family law cases.

Stacy was able to absorb information quickly, assess the situation, and work with each client in a genial and positive manner. Stacy was assigned primarily to the family law unit. She met with clients, prepared divorce/custody pleadings, interacted with the local circuit court judges, and appeared before the judges on a number of divorce, custody and child support cases. Under attorney supervision, she also argued motions to set aside convictions. These outcomes allow many individuals to clear their criminal histories and obtain employment. Stacy won all of her hearings.

Additionally, Stacy provided information and met with clients regarding guardianship paperwork/filings, social security payments, student loans, and the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act and creditor harassment. Her persistence resolved many client issues and, even when she could not resolve the client's problem, Stacy researched the law and made every effort to assist the client.

Our attorneys, as well as the local judges, were impressed with Stacy's intellect and skills. All of the attorneys requested that Stacy handle the files since she did so with such legal acumen. We greatly appreciate that the Equal Justice funding allowed Stacy to work in our office every day throughout the entire summer. She quickly became a valued member of the staff.

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Stacy has been a wonderful asset to our organization. She is smart, capable, diligent and compassionate. She had a wonderfully productive summer and she surely will have a stellar legal career. We are thrilled that she has decided to remain with us as a volunteer throughout the school year.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jill Nylander", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jill Nylander
Executive Director