

Summer Internship Report 2017

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Hometown: Louisville, Kentucky



**U. S. District Court,
Eastern Kentucky
Frankfort, Kentucky**

Provide an overview of the organization/research project and a summary of your responsibilities, tasks, and/or projects.

I worked as an intern with Judge G. Van Tatenhove--a federal district judge in Frankfort, Kentucky. The federal district court reviews cases involving federal law. The judge has several law clerks that work for him to research cases and to write decisions. Primarily my work dealt with house-keeping matters around the chambers such as updating the law library and writing summaries of trials that had taken place over the previous year.

During your internship, what did you accomplish or how did you make a difference? In what ways did you grow in your professional and technical skills?

Working in an office environment for the first time I believe was an important step for me. I learned little things that are applicable everywhere such as how to operate office equipment, and more important things such as how to be a part of the culture in the office. Simply doing the grunt work that any undergraduate intern is familiar with taught me more than I expected. Updating the law library gave me a rough understanding of how Federal law is codified. I was also to gain some understanding of the appeals process while typing out letters from prisoners. At times it felt like mundane work, but looking back it feels satisfying to think that I helped in someone's appeal.

Describe a problem that you helped to solve at your internship. What skills or knowledge from your education at Sewanee helped you address the problem?

While I was an intern the shredder stopped working. I discovered that it had not been oiled in quite some time, and was able to repair it.

In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?

All the summer interns worked together in the same office and we often shared the issues we were working on with each other and bounced ideas off one another.

How did your internship affect your career plans?

Before my internship I was fairly certain that I wanted to pursue a career in law but I was not sure what shape that would take. After eight weeks of working for a judge I don't believe that I could reasonably decide on what sort of law I would like to practice, but I did come to realize that I would like to do further work with prisoner advocacy.

In what ways did your internship cause you to encounter people of different backgrounds from your own? What steps did you take to communicate effectively with such persons? What did you learn from such persons' perspectives?

Working in a Judge's chambers I was the only one that had not received any formal legal education. What a wonderful opportunity it was to be able to ask questions about what I was working on! However, striking a balance between being a curious intern and asking too many questions could sometimes be a challenge without a legal background. Learning to ask the right questions was paramount during the internship.

Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:

I can not thank you enough for the funding you provide students for internships; your contribution helps make possible opportunities that will influence the rest of our lives. The ability to work an internship that otherwise would be impractical for students without earning a wage puts Sewanee students miles ahead of other college students.