

**Internship Report for Summer 2015
Office of the Public Defender, Appellate Division in Baltimore, Maryland**

For the months of June and July, I was a summer legal intern for the Office of the Public Defender, Appellate Division in Baltimore, Maryland. I worked directly under Bradford Peabody, Assistant Public Defender, and Sewanee Class of 1971. The Public Defender's Office provides superior legal representation for indigent individuals who have been prosecuted by the State, and cannot afford a private attorney. Mr. Peabody works to protect the fundamental individual rights of his clients and ensures access to the guaranteed protections afforded by the justice system.

The Appellate Division reviews cases that have already been decided in trial court, but the defendant has requested an appeal. Appellate courts do not retry cases; they determine if what occurred in the trial court followed proper procedure and if proper law was applied. Not all cases requesting an appeal are granted certiorari, or an order by which a higher court reviews the decision of a lower court, and for the Appellate Division in Baltimore, these cases are voted on during a weekly meeting.

Once cert is granted, the appellate lawyer must write an opening brief explaining the facts of the case and why the appellate court should reverse the decision made in trial court. This brief is sent to the appellee who then writes a responsive brief, and finally, the appellant has another chance to write a reply brief. The case then goes to the appellate court where oral arguments are made in front of a panel of judges. At the end of the oral argument the case is submitted to the court, which then makes a decision over a period of time.

My first day of the internship was spent listening to an oral argument in the appellate court in Annapolis, Maryland. This allowed me to see the final steps of a case that filed for an appeal and was granted certiorari. The remainder of the first 3 weeks of my internship was spent working in the Felony Trial Division, assisting trial attorneys with various tasks and attending trial. This division serves citizens who are accused of committing crimes with a sentence of one year or more, such as murder, rape, or robbery. I assisted multiple attorneys in the division, but primarily worked under Rosemary Ranier, Assistant Public Defender.

A majority of my time was spent in court, which allowed me to observe and understand typical trial proceedings, attend preliminary arraignments, and gain a general understanding of what being a trial attorney entails. I had the opportunity to assist a trial attorney with a case that went to trial, helping with voir dire (jury selection), opening and closing arguments, and witness questioning. That trial showed me why the services of the Public Defender's Office are so necessary, and the impact they make on so many people's lives.

When not in trial, I performed easy but necessary tasks for multiple lawyers in the office. I transcribed recorded witness statements, organized evidentiary photographs, interviewed witnesses over the phone, prepared case files, filed motions and subpoenas with the court, wrote and mailed subpoenas, and met with clients for initial interviews. All of these tasks made me realize how vital law clerks and other assistants are to an exceedingly busy office like the Public Defender. These trial attorneys represent several clients at a time, all requiring multiple appearances in court, meetings with the client and

witnesses, and an abundance of time to go over their case. This was a very fast-paced office and I was happy to be able to help in any way I could.

The rest of the internship was spent conducting legal research and legal writing. I learned how to research with the help of Mr. Peabody, using the program WestLaw, then prepared a memorandum containing the relevant cases I had found. My research was used to assist Mr. Peabody and another appellate attorney with briefs for upcoming cases, which will be filed with the appellate court. While learning how to use a completely new program and gain an understanding of legal jargon was difficult at first, with time and practice I was able to find relevant cases and apply them to the case I was conducting research for, and condense them into a thoughtful argument to send to the attorney.

Throughout this summer I learned a lot of things, but what stands out the most is the importance of second chances. Sitting in court I realized that I err on the side of thinking that most people are innocent rather than guilty, but if you are given a second chance to correct a mistake, it is not to be taken lightly. I realized this as I watched a judge give a 20 year old man facing 45 years in prison for armed robbery and assault, probation. She gave him restrictions on certain locations he was allowed to go to, per his parent's requests, she gave him a list of books he had write reports on throughout his probation, and she gave him the promise that if he failed to follow probation she would charge him to the full extent of the law. But she also gave him a second chance at life.

After this summer I am more committed to a legal career and have started thinking more seriously about attending law school in a year or so. I am very grateful for the opportunity to have worked for the Public Defender's Office and to have acquired skills that

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July 29, 2015

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will help me begin a legal career. I am uncertain about what type of law I would like to practice, but this summer has been a tremendous help in the path to figuring that out.