

This summer I interned with the Commonwealth Attorney's office in Bedford Virginia. The commonwealth attorney's office deals with the prosecutorial side of judicial proceedings. My formal internship included the observation of formal trial proceedings which formed the basis of the experiences during my internship this summer. I also had the responsibility of conducting legal research alongside of licensed attorneys. This experience affected me positively not only by allowing me to see how important research is in the field of law but by allowing me to see how a professional effectively does their job. In addition to these responsibilities, I had the opportunity to interact with judicial personnel, law enforcement and multiple types of courthouse employees as these skills were essential to successfully performing the duties of my internship. I had the opportunity to work beside four other interns who had just completed their third year of law school, this experience was one that I was not aware of entering the internship however it granted me a valuable experience in being able to talk to them about graduate school and the benefits or difficulties that they have found. I also had the opportunity to work with the victim witness assistance program which is a program that is set up with the commonwealth attorney's office but deals more with the victims and their needs prior, during, and after the court proceedings. This different viewpoint was one that allowed me to see how important everyone is in the trial process; without the victim witness assistance program it would be very hard for the attorney to do his job to the best of his abilities.

During my internship I was able to participate or be present for meetings and court proceedings on multiple levels including Juvenile and Domestic Court, General

District Court, and Circuit Court. I started with the task of purging many old files which was quite monotonous however this was a valuable experience because it allowed me to see how important an excellent record system is for anyone in the field of law. While this was very time consuming it also allowed me to become familiar with how case files are supposed to be set up and what are included in them. Different employees would explain what different documents were and what the purpose was for each of them. Over this task I became familiar with court orders, subpoenas, warrants, and police reports. I also learned the differences between juvenile and adult matters and how they have to be dealt with differently whether they are misdemeanors or felonies. After I learned the different files and how they were to be handled I became accustomed to updating the file systems and setting up new files. I would go over the docket, in depth, daily with the commonwealth attorney who was dealing with the caseload for that day. This included what the case was over, who was involved, what court was and how the sentences were decided. While working with the victim witness assistance program I was responsible for making phone calls to all victims and witnesses that were involved in upcoming or ongoing cases to update them on various information dealing with their case. I also had the responsibility of forming victim/witness client files which included client information sheets, warrants of arrests, police reports, and medical records. In addition to forming these files I had to mail contact letters to victims and witnesses on their situations. By participating in the record keeping process I was able to better understand how the trial process works and develop a certain understanding of different cases. In-person meetings were also a vital part of the trial process. By participating in

these meetings I developed interpersonal skills that could not have been obtained in any other way. This was one of my favorite parts of my internship because I was able to see a difference that I was able to make for these clients.

Undoubtedly the most interesting aspect of my summer internship was the opportunity I had to participate in the Lyon Sisters cold case. This is a case that is 40 years old and still ongoing however this summer the first major steps were made in bringing it to trial. This case had dealings with people in Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and Tennessee. This massive amount of people involved allowed me to see how imperative cooperation is in this field especially on the prosecutorial side of bringing a case to trial. I came in contact with agents from the Virginia State Police, Maryland Police Department, the FBI, the Maryland state prosecutor's office, and multiple media sources. I was able to attend multiple forensic dig sites and see the responsibilities of the prosecutor in understanding all evidence of a case. I even had the opportunity to be a part of the press conference when the indictments of those accused were released. If convicted it would be the oldest cold case without a body ever convicted in United States history. This historic case and how it was handled by everyone involved along with the involvement I had and the lessons I learned from it was the best part of my internship.

This internship opened my eyes to the vast aspects that go into cases while also reaffirming my ultimate goal of attending law school. I still need to explore other fields of law but this experience was one that was educational and important to my career path.