

Richards Hundley

Internship with the Honorable David C. Norton

TONYA Report

This summer I had the unique opportunity to be an intern in the chambers of the Honorable Federal District Judge David C. Norton. This was a perfect look into the legal world, especially on the Federal level. Previously, I had only a limited view of the law within the confines of my parents' law careers, but the internship this summer really opened my eyes to a whole new, and very interesting, view of the law.

All of the employees in the courthouse were very nice and seemed to love their jobs. I could not have asked to be apart of a better working team, as I saw firsthand how Judge Norton's chambers all work together in such a great environment, all the while having the utmost respect for the Judges, lawyers, and each other. Justin McGee, who did this internship many summers ago, was a perfect mentor to guide me along the way into the legal field. But everyone in there, from the U.S. Marshals, the other interns, and the Judges were all very helpful in explaining any questions I had. The internship allowed me to connect with everyone in the legal field, providing me with firsthand knowledge of the Federal Judicial system.

Although my skills and knowledge was limited, I helped as much as I could around the office. Every other intern in the courthouse was in law school, but that did not stop me from becoming an efficient member of Judge Norton's team. Among some of my other duties, I mainly acted as editor and reviewer of the clerks' documents. I received many of the court memos and suggestions that they wrote up for the Judge. I made sure

that they were quoting correct laws, cases, and other documents, and made sure that everything made sense and was spelled correctly. The memos and orders go directly to the Judge for review, and then usually go straight into the court database, for the lawyers and others to read. This gave me an in-depth look at how the court process goes, from the initial complaint all the way to the final order given by the Judge (and his clerks).

Another of my duties was legal researching. During my time there, we actually encountered some very abnormal cases, one of which was to be the very first of its' kind. But due to the uniqueness of these cases some very thorough research was required to find laws, cases, and various other statutes to help in making a ruling on the case. This is very hard to do when the case so original, so after some very broad searching, I was able to find a wide variety of cases that did have some slight similarities to this case, so I did prove to be somewhat helpful for the clerk. But I would provide a type up of many pages with laws and previous cases that shared certain points with the case, that in turn went to the Clerks and the Judge. The researching also gave me a detailed understanding of the legal database West Law. Usually people are first introduced to it in law school and taught how to dig through the database to find what they are specifically looking for. This knowledge will prove valuable if I go to law school, as I will be one step ahead of my classmates.

The most fascinating advantage to my internship was my ability to watch any court proceedings going on at the time in the courthouse. Whenever the Judge had something, I was able to walk out with the Judge and watch everything that went on from his point of view. This was also exciting because many of the cases that I had looked into I got to see, and I was able to fully brief myself before the other proceedings so that I

would have a full knowledge of the case. And sometimes, once court was adjourned, Judge Norton would introduce me to the lawyers. The Judge also let me sit in on some status conferences and other more private meetings with the lawyers, a rare opportunity for most people. But when Judge Norton didn't have any cases to handle, I was able to sit in other courtrooms. I saw pleas, sentencings, a drug rehab program, and even a jury trial across the street in the county courthouse. My viewing of how the law was handled helped to tie in all that I had done behind the desk, and the respect and etiquette of the courtroom was inspiring.

My summer interning with Judge Norton had a greatly positive aspect on my development and thoughts as to my future. I was able to see and partake in the legal process on the Federal level and I got the rare view of it all from the inside. The experience has led me even closer to pursuing a legal career and showed me that being a lawyer can be very exciting, respectable, and knowledgeable. I feel that I will be applying to law school in the near future, and this internship certainly helped to spur that on. I thank you for the opportunity to do it.