

Courtney Moseley

August 2013

Final Internship Report

Interning with Judge Steven D. King

Over the summer of 2013, I interned with Judge Steven D. King of the Circuit Court of Blount County, Alabama. For the most part, I would sit on the witness stand ready to complete any task asked of me such as running an errand or making a copy while I observed as the docket of civil, domestic, or criminal cases was called. I observed criminal cases involving felony charges such as murder, rape, sodomy, theft, porn production, sexual assault, domestic abuse, domestic assault, drug possession or trafficking, and vehicular homicide. For these cases, the proceedings included arraignments, indictments, sentencings, and initial appearances. If, however, the cases were civil or domestic, motions would be presented and the judge would be informed of any new advances in the cases. Occasionally, testimony would be taken at the bench to be added to the official record, but rarely, custody or criminal trials would be held in order for the judge to hear testimonies from multiple people. Most did not go to trial as it was very common for an agreement to be reached between the parties.

One week during my internship was criminal trial week where the judge planned to hear a few cases that had made it to the top of the trial docket. I was able to observe how the juries are summoned, questioned, and stricken. For the most part, all the cases settled before they came to trial, and the juries were never needed. On a separate week, I observed the same process be used to select a grand jury of eighteen people

who would serve a ninety day term. This jury is in place to help the District Attorney determine if she has enough evidence to prosecute an individual. If I was not observing proceedings in the courtroom, watching as a jury was stricken, or completing routine office tasks, I was able to sit in on meetings in the judge's chambers, read previous cases in order to help form a ruling on a current case, sit in on District Court proceedings, read and make notes on transcripts for the District Attorney, and even meet the governor of Alabama, Robert Bentley.

Aside from learning the ways of the court, I began to hone in my skill of defending a decision based on rulings of previous cases. Judge King gave me past cases as well as the current case and asked me to determine what I thought would be a reasonable decision. Luckily, Judge King agreed with the decision I concluded with. Also, I learned the importance of following protocol. Two cases I observed were greatly impacted by someone not following their protocol, one being an attorney and one being a police officer. I also gained the skill of learning how something can be argued two different ways. For instance, the sentence for stealing car parts can be dramatically different if the car parts are considered scrap metal instead of usable parts. This was very interesting to me as it taught me to think about things from multiple angles. Moreover, I learned terminology that I never knew before. For instance, I learned that a YO, youthful offender, is a status that can be applied for if the defendant was under the age of twenty-one. If granted, this lessens the punishment, and keeps the conviction off the public record. I also learned about the different types of bonds, and why someone may receive a certain type of bond. For example, Judge King gave out a number of

signature bonds over the course of my internship. This helped to alleviate some of the pressure the jail was feeling from housing so many inmates.

Before I began this internship, I fully expected to practice family law and act as a child advocate. After this experience of being introduced to civil, domestic, and criminal law, however, I have become much more intrigued by the criminal sector. This is something that I never anticipated happening as I always said that I would never be able to represent someone who had committed a terrible crime, but I found myself more and more interested in the prosecution side as well as the duties of the District Attorney's office. I am fascinated with how that position allows for involvement in the investigative stage of the case as well as the accomplishment of bringing people to justice. Over the course of the summer, I never lost my interest in the family side of the law, but I gravitated more towards the child victim cases and away from the custody cases. All in all, I do still plan to attend law school and practice. I will not abandon my interest in family law, but I may pursue it through the criminal cases.

While the exact division of law I practice may not be decided, I do know that I have no interest in becoming a judge. Over the course of the summer, I gained so much more respect for Judge King and every other judge that I have known. The way they are able to remember the details of the quantity of cases they have and how they can go back and forth between the cases so easily amazes me. Not only this, but the pressure of making so many decisions and making sure many of these cases can be supported by previous cases causes stress that I have no interest in handling.

All in all, my internship provided me an invaluable experience. After having observed everything I did, I cannot imagine coming out of law school and attempting to practice law without having learned the simple things I learned this summer such as courtroom etiquette and how the proceedings in the courtroom are handled. Not only this, but I met many attorneys who were more than happy to give me many pieces of advice. Overall, this experience did one thing; it confirmed my love for the courtroom and my desire to be an officer of the court.

Melissa Webb

From: Courtney Moseley
Sent: Sunday, August 18, 2013 6:58 PM
To: Melissa Webb
Subject: Final Report
Attachments: MoseleyFinalReport.docx

Hi Mrs. Webb!

Attached is my final report for my summer internship. If there is anything I need to correct, please let me know!
Thank you so much!

I hope you have had a great summer!

AOT,
Courtney Moseley

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