

### Tonya Public Affairs Internship Fund Executive Summary

Chancellor Jeffrey Stewart of Winchester, Tennessee, offered me an unpaid summer internship with the 12th Judicial District in the Tennessee Court System. The internship took place during a seven week-long period this summer in which I spent time with various professionals within the legal system. This included time with the Circuit Court clerks' office, Chancery Court, General Sessions Court, Drug Court, the Sheriff's Department, the Public Defender's office, and the District Attorney's office. I also was able to interact with and learn from public citizens who were accessing the legal system.

Observing the various parts of the legal system has provided me with a well-rounded understanding of the legal system. Chancellor Stewart stressed the importance of seeing how people hold different perspectives of the legal system based upon their experience and position with the system, which is why he placed me within different divisions each week. Thus, rotating between different professionals gave me a unique perspective of the legal system.

This internship provided me with a general understanding of the court system and legal experience in several different areas of the law. Since the internship allowed me to witness several different courts and professionals within the court, I was not limited to one view of the court system, but achieved a broad perspective of the entire system. Witnessing the regulation of a relatively small county's court system enlightened me to the distinctions between it and the court system in my home town of Memphis. A visit to the Sequatchie County courthouse further educated me in the peculiarities of each county's system. Also, by attending different courts, I noticed the different methods judges use to ensure orderliness within their courts. I am planning to attend law school beginning this fall, so I have been able to gain valuable legal experience which I can apply during my legal education.