



"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Letter from Birmingham Jail, April 16, 1963

Martin Luther King, Jr.
Summer Internship and Fellowship Program

Pennsylvania
Legal Aid Network, Inc.

THE DRUM MAJOR

Class of 2017 Essay Collection



"Make a career of humanity, commit yourself to the noble struggle for equal rights. You will make a greater person of yourself, a greater nation of your country and a finer world to live in."

– Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Inc.
Louise Brookins Building
118 Locust Street
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July 25, 2017

To the 2017 Martin Luther King, Jr. Interns:

We are pleased to present you with the 2017 edition of **THE DRUM MAJOR**, which is a small token of appreciation for your efforts this summer.

Through your work during the past ten weeks, you have touched the lives of many clients who have nowhere else to turn. You learned how to use your skills to make equal justice a reality.

For this, we thank you. Wherever your paths may lead you, we hope that your experience here will be an inspiration and a reminder of how you can make a difference.

Very Truly Yours,



Samuel W. Milkes, Esq.
Executive Director



Very Truly Yours,



Arlene A. Marshall-Hockensmith, Esq.
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Community Justice Project



Law for the People

I came to law school with a desire to serve underrepresented and neglected communities. I knew that doing legal aid work this summer would provide me with the opportunity to build on that desire. I've wanted to become an attorney for as long as I can remember; my reason has never been to make a great deal of money but to help and speak up for those who cannot speak up for themselves.

During my search for a summer internship, I knew that I wanted to do something public interest-related to serve marginalized communities. When I learned of the Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Inc.'s Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) Summer Internship Program, I knew that this program would be a perfect fit for me. The program provided me with the opportunity to showcase the theme highlighted in Dr. King's Drum Major Instinct sermon which was to seek greatness in service and in love.

Drawing upon the teachings of Jesus, who did none of the things that the world would associate with greatness, yet stands as the most influential figure in human history, Dr. King reminded us that everyone can serve others, regardless of background, education, status, etc., and that we need only "a heart full of grace and a soul generated by love" to be that servant. This is a powerful teaching that I have seen exemplified through the work done at the Community Justice Project (CJP). Legal aid work is generally not seen as one of the greatest legal paths to take by the world's definition of greatness. However, to me, these attorneys, who willingly give their time and energy to serve and make the lives of others better, are the true definition of greatness.

Working at CJP this summer was my first experience working in a legal aid office. I did not know what to expect coming in but have had a positive experience. My work at CJP exposed me to a variety of legal issues affecting low-income communities of which I was previously unaware and showed me why public interest/legal aid work is so important. I also really appreciated the laidback office environment. There is often a lot of talk about how "high strung" and serious attorneys can be but this was not my experience at CJP. While the attorneys are serious about their work, their personalities are extremely friendly and welcoming. My supervisors, Peter and Marielle, included me and their other summer intern in virtually

everything in the office. On my first day, I helped file an appeal for an undocumented immigrant whose medical benefits were erroneously terminated. When I learned the client's back story, I felt so much empathy for her. At the same time, I was glad that an organization like CJP exists to help her because, without their help, she would have no one to assist her with her legal troubles. I truly admire how much the attorneys at CJP care about the population they serve. It is clear that this is not just a job to them but a passion.

Throughout my internship, I got to sit in on a number of conference calls all covering different topics, attended my first deposition, sat in on a few client interviews, learned new research methods, and had the opportunity to travel to CJP's Hazelton and Reading Offices. I also attended meetings and networked with attorneys from the Community Action Association of Pennsylvania (CAAP), the Department of Justice (DOJ), and the Attorney General's (AG) Office. The deposition was an interesting learning experience for me because I witnessed an interpreter being used to translate. The deposition process took a bit longer than normal due to some translation issues in regards to specific terminology.

During my first year of law school, I had an opportunity to conduct a practice deposition in one of my classes and it was not the same as the real thing. I appreciated the opportunity to witness a deposition first-hand so early in my legal career. Now, I know what to expect if I ever have to depose a client who needs a translator.

One thing I was not looking forward to doing this summer was research. However, I actually enjoyed the research assignments given to me because they were all new, interesting legal issues of which I had no knowledge and I love to learn new areas of the law. The research projects assigned to me covered a variety of topics like Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), excessive force by police officers, medical and cash assistance, the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), and employment-related issues.

The major highlights of my internship experience with CJP were handling the intake process and leading a client interview for a particular client and attending a DOJ meeting. I enjoyed the intake process because I had the responsibility to research the potential client's problem to determine if she had a legal remedy. Once the staff and I decided we could help the client, Marielle allowed me to lead the client interview. I was both excited and nervous as it was only my second time interviewing someone. I was not sure how effective I would be in soliciting most of the facts and information needed. I was also nervous because we had to use an interpreter. Nevertheless, the interview went well and I received positive feedback on my questioning technique and demeanor.

I was glad I had the opportunity to attend the DOJ meeting at CJP's Hazelton office to discuss civil rights/ civil liberties violations taking place in the city as I have a strong interest in that area of the law. The DOJ attorneys were very down to earth and a lot less serious than I anticipated which made for a nice surprise. Prior to this meeting, I had no idea that legal aid organizations worked with the DOJ so it was interesting to learn about their relationship and how they work together for the common good.

I am thankful to CJP and the MLK Summer Internship Program for the experiences and opportunities this internship afforded to me. I like that CJP does not specialize in one particular area of the law which allowed me to have a more well-rounded experience. My time spent at CJP strengthened my desire to continue public interest- type of work and represent low-income populations. As Dr. King stated in his Drum Major Instinct sermon, "We should strive to be first in love, in moral excellence, and in generosity." I look forward to taking what moral excellence and generosity I've learned from this internship and building on those traits throughout the rest of my legal career.

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“If you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice... ‘Say that I was a drum major for peace. I was a drum major for righteousness. And all of the other shallow things will not matter.’”

— King, “The Drum Major”

On February 4th, 1968, just about a month before he was assassinated, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his “Drum Major Instinct” sermon before the Ebenezer Baptist Church congregation. The core of his message was to highlight the effects of the “drum major instinct — a desire to be out front, a desire to lead the parade.”¹ King concluded his sermon by imagining his own funeral, in which he urged the congregation not to be remembered for his life’s accomplishments; but rather, to be remembered as one who “tried to give his life to others.”² I, too, have thought about my funeral. What picture will they use? What will people say? Much like Dr. King, I hope that when I am called to sit by my Father, people will say, “she dedicated her life to serving others,” as King did.

I draw part of my life’s commitment to helping others from my parents who have dedicated their lives to others by working as civil servants. However, my dedication to working with victims of domestic violence dates back a couple of years. While perusing through my school’s library collection, I stumbled upon the movie, “Not Without My Daughter.” Since watching that movie, I have been passionate about domestic violence work. I remember doing countless projects on domestic violence. Whether it was for my French class or my life skills class, my teachers were going to hear what I had to say on the topic. In between my graduation from college and my entry into law school, I worked as a victim advocate at the Blair County Protection From Abuse office. Since working as an advocate in Blair County, I have longed to continue my work in the domestic violence arena. Thus, when the opportunity arose to intern at Neighborhood Legal Services Association (NLSA), I was eager at the prospect.

The work that I have done this summer has been both fulfilling and tiring. There were times when I was frustrated by the barriers in the legal system. It frustrated me that a victim, who had

¹ King, “The Drum Major,” 170- 171.

² Ibid.

separated herself from her abuser, was constantly being dragged into court as a means of power and control enabling the abuser to use his wealth to pay an attorney to continuously file senseless motions, which went against everything I learned in Professional Responsibility just a few months ago.

This internship has allowed me to help clients navigate the legal system which many of us know is neither quick nor easy, despite what Law and Order might have them think. I worked with countless individuals facing different levels of trauma and abuse; a young lady, who was only a year younger than me, pulling pieces of dried blood from her hair after she had been brutally beaten by her boyfriend; a woman who ran out of her house with a plastic bag full of baby items and her infant baby in her arms; and a woman who attempted to start a new life for herself and her child away from her abuser but was ordered to return back to Pittsburgh for improperly relocating.

One of the greatest perks of working in this sector is that it transcends many other areas of law like custody, divorce, dependency, child abuse, housing, and, probably the most recognizable of all, poverty. I had the opportunity to work with clients from all walks of life, from the wealthiest to some of the poorest clients in the greater Pittsburgh area. Truly, domestic violence impacts people across all societal echelons which requires me to use my legal background and domestic violence training to pull various resources from my toolbox.

People often question me as to why I don't have an interest in corporate law. Well, my response is by lending my clients an ear, by providing them with tissues (and trust me, I've handed out a lot of those this summer) to wipe away the pain of some of the daily struggles they face, by answering their legal questions, by helping them draft their petitions, by making a referral to a social worker or a shelter, by safety planning, or by explaining to them the legal process and what to expect at their final hearing, I am empowering them. I am helping to give them back just a little piece of themselves that has been hidden away; providing them with the push they need to tell their story, literally and figuratively; and giving a voice to the voiceless. This is why I do what I do and why I love what I do.

Legal aid is one of the most rewarding and thankless sectors but we don't do it for praise nor money. We do it because somebody has to do it. We do it because we care. In the words of Dr. King, "I cannot waste time to bask in my own glory while people in my community are being ignored, their civil liberties are being walked on, and their livelihoods destroyed." Through my time and work at NLSA, I realize now, more than ever, in a time where there is a push to reduce legal aid funding, that the work done by NLSA is invaluable. Our system is not perfect but, through our work at NLSA, we are harnessing our drum major instincts for the greater good of society. We

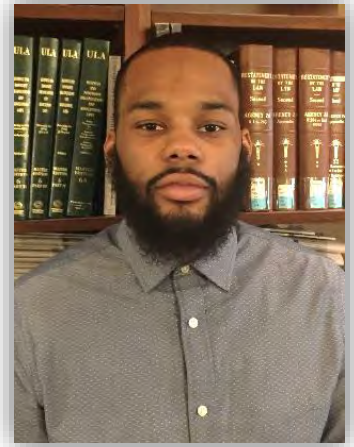
have no desire to be first, to lead the parade, but rather to be drum majors for justice, peace and righteousness.

Very few people take the time to acknowledge the men and women who fight daily, not necessarily for a perfect system but for a fair system. They are some of the kindest, smartest, and most compassionate people I have ever met.

Every day that we show up to work for our clients is a day in which we are working as drum majors for justice, embodying the ideas of Dr. King. I am thankful to have had the opportunity to learn from and work with the men and women who work arduously to give people a renewed sense of hope, without ever asking to be noticed or recognized. They are living examples that “greatness comes from humble servitude.”³ As I close my chapter at NLSA, I hope to continue to harness the drum major instinct and help provide the call to action for others who have not witnessed that greatness.

³ Mark 9:33-37 - Greatness in Humble Servitude.

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Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania



The Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network (PLAN) intrigued me because they represent the underrepresented. People from low-income environments are underrepresented because they do not have the resources to be heard by the legal system or society. Those “underrepresented” people make up the majority of the community that contributed to molding me into the man I am today.

I knew working for PLAN would give me a feeling of self-worth that I may not have necessarily received from the private sector. My internship placement allowed me to serve those individuals who are often forgotten about or treated unfairly by society at large. In this day and age, most people are only concerned about their own problems and situations that impact them directly. I knew accepting this internship would be more than just a resume booster; individuals’ lives would be changed for the better. Furthermore, I knew that serving this type of clientele would be more fulfilling for me because I could go home each night knowing my contributions on cases would help relieve some stress our clients face in day-to-day life. I had imagined low-income clientele being more appreciative and trusting of public-interest attorneys because most of these attorneys sacrificed lucrative careers to ensure those living in low-income receive the same competent and zealous legal defense as citizens with the ability to pay high-priced attorneys.

I was also attracted to the location of the program. Chester is not far from my hometown of Wilmington, Delaware. Growing up, I always heard the city of Chester mirrored my city so I knew I would be helping individuals essentially from the same demographic and circumstances. I am all too familiar with members of the low-income community feeling taken advantage of by the legal system because they did not have the means to put up a good defense. My intuition made me feel like it would be easier to connect with these individuals more naturally rather than interviewing sophisticated business clients. Overall, I looked forward to aiding PLAN attorneys and staff to provide legal services to those in need of a chance. When I say chance, I mean the ability to have an opportunity to succeed and grow within society.

On May 22, 2017, I had my first experience of actual legal practice from a defendant’s perspective. I was anxious to interact with clients who came from similar circumstances as myself and assist them in receiving favorable decisions. I was excited because I had only been

exposed to the law from the government sector perspective. During the first few days, I was able to observe client interviews, construct memorandums based on client files, and witness client hearings. Subsequently, I met with each program attorney to learn about the areas of law they practiced. Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania (LASP) handles the following types of cases: government benefits, housing, family law, domestic violence, elder law, and bankruptcy law.

During my time at the Chester office, I often times felt empathy and sympathy for the various clients after sitting through their initial interview with the attorneys. This was new territory for me because most people consider me to be detached. I attribute that to my environment. Over the years, I have become numb to things that would disturb the average person. When I heard a client say he could not afford his medication for a serious medical condition, I was taken back because he is someone's family member. Once I heard that, I knew times were extremely hard for someone to forego the medicine they need to live in order to be able to eat, have shelter, and transportation; to actually see a person without a support or network to rely on to ensure his health is preserved was heartbreaking and eye opening. Furthermore, it was disheartening to know that we were his only hope to obtain government assistance.

I also had the opportunity to participate in a custody clinic. I was able to help parents begin the legal process of seeking custody and modifications to custody orders. I personally know what it is like to fill out the copious amounts of paper because I had to do it on my own behalf to ensure I was able to get equal time and make important decisions on my son's behalf. At the conclusion of the clinic, I saw all of the participants' faces light up because they knew they had LASP's support in attempting to establish a meaningful relationship with their child.

My experience at LASP has been nothing short of amazing. I gained invaluable experience that cannot be taught in the classroom. The actual experience I obtained from interviewing clients, pulling information from documents to construct memorandums, and going to various hearings is irreplaceable. More importantly, I was able to impact the lives of individuals and families in desperate need of legal services. The most rewarding part of the internship was recognizing the clients' appreciation of our hard work. The results of their cases were monumental to them because, often times, it pertained to them obtaining financial assistance, government benefits, housing, custody of children, or a Protection From Abuse (PFA) Order. Meeting these individuals was a humbling experience in itself because it reminded me to appreciate all the things I do have and to make it my responsibility to help others in any way I possibly can.

Martin Luther King, Jr. once stated, “Life's most persistent and urgent question is, what are you doing for others?” In my household, I witnessed my mother constantly bend over backwards for friends and family. She always preached to me to help those in need if you are in position to do so. This was a hard lesson for me to learn because sometimes I would see these individuals take my mother’s kindness as a weakness. Despite being apprehensive about helping everyone I encountered, I found it very difficult to turn down anyone in need. Today, I pride myself on helping and investing in others every opportunity I get. The ability to impact someone else’s life in the positive way is more rewarding than any paycheck or accolade I could receive. Furthermore, I believe a person who has been helped by someone else at some point in time is more likely to help another individual in need. Nowadays when I do something to benefit someone else, I make sure I tell them to return the favor to the next person they come across in need.

I am forever thankful for the opportunity to participate in the Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) Summer Internship Program. This placement afforded me the opportunity to make lifetime personal and professional connections. Also, I was able to get exposure to different areas of law, clients, and legal processes that will help me to make more informed decisions pertaining to my post-graduation career path. Most importantly, this opportunity provided me the opportunity to help the voiceless citizens from the Chester, Pennsylvania community. This program is reflective of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s lifetime body of work because it challenges all program participants in furthering his goal to ensure all people are treated equally and that their rights are protected and honored.

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North Penn Legal Services



Earlier this summer, Legal Services Corporation (LSC) published their 2017 Justice Gap Report. I had just begun my internship with North Penn Legal Services (NPLS) in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, when I first read the report. The findings were, unfortunately, not at all surprising to me. The 2017 Justice Gap Report revealed the disturbing lack of justice that limited and low-income Americans face in civil legal matters, when there is not a right to counsel. The report revealed that 86% of the civil legal problems reported by low-income Americans received inadequate or no legal help at all. Further, almost 3 out of 4 low-income households experienced at least one civil legal problem within the past year, including; housing condition violations, domestic violence, and access to benefits issues. This is precisely why civil legal aid is so important, and why I have been truly honored to have worked at NPLS through a Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) Internship.

When people think of a legal crisis, they rarely think of civil legal issues or the importance of access to free civil legal aid. However; civil matters in certain situations can be a matter of life or death, especially in the case of Protection from Abuse (PFA) cases. This summer, as a Certified Legal Intern, I was able to do limited representation in court proceedings with the supervision of my supervising attorney. Primarily, this meant issues such as landlord tenant disputes and PFA cases. Despite the sometimes heavy emotional toll these difficult cases can bear, I thoroughly enjoyed assisting with PFAs, which allow some protection from abusers by ordering a variety of conditions—usually no contact, stalk, abuse, or harass—a violation of which would mean criminal penalties. While certainly no case is ever “routine”, for myself and attorneys in legal aid who help provide representation in PFA hearings, there is a certain similarity in the form of the hearings and the types of evidence helpful in securing the final orders; however, for an individual who has never been to a civil hearing, let alone a PFA hearing where particularly private and traumatic circumstances must be discussed on open record, or has limited to no knowledge of the rules of evidence and hearsay, they can be daunting. As the LSC Justice Gap Report points out, many people who are unable to successfully receive adequate assistance simply forego judicial remedies altogether. Not only do PFA orders work to create a safety plan and possibly deter subsequent abuse, but they give a voice to individuals who are

frequently silenced by their abusers. For these and many other reasons, PFAs were particularly rewarding. Throughout the summer I was lucky enough to be able to shadow two extremely talented, passionate attorneys, do several hearings of my own, and work with paralegals doing administrative appeals. The ability to not only work on a variety of different types of issues but take the lead on several cases was an invaluable experience that allowed me to apply the advocacy skills I had learned previously not only through the advocacy courses at my law school but as a member of a Family Law moot court team.

While I may have some limited legal training that allows me to understand and navigate the civil legal process, my internship has also been a humbling lesson in privilege and motive. I have always been a moderately competitive individual, an attribute which I carried, like many, to law school. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said in his Drum Major speech regarding the competitive, ambitious “drum instinct”. Dr. King states, “[t]he drum major instinct can lead to exclusivism in one’s thinking and can lead one to feel that because he has some training, he’s a little better than that person who doesn’t have it”. The theoretical, legal training we receive in law school is valuable, but often it instills a cutthroat, competitive edge that many carry through to their legal careers. I’ll admit, I often thought in terms of black and white, “winning” or “not winning”, did I do something embarrassing in court, etc.; however, as Dr. King stated, “that’s the uncontrolled perverted use of the drum major instinct.” By being able to not only interact with clients but take on their legal challenges as a Certified Legal Intern at my internship, it transformed what was a theoretical desire to help other people because it made me feel good and I found legal aid to be interesting, to a drive to ensure equal access to justice because it was the right and just thing to do. I do not think that I will ever get over the nerves and anxiety that I routinely experienced this summer right before a hearing, but what I am sure of now, after my MLK Internship, is that it is not important that I have perfect courtroom form, or that I always think of the most articulate thing to say, or that I’m afraid of what other attorneys and judges think of me. Because the experience is not about me. It is about serving others and ensuring their access to justice. “Yes, if you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice...And all of the other shallow things will not matter.”

Marissa Lawall
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Pennsylvania Health Law Project



“Let us all aim to be truly great, so our lives may be a blessing on the world.”

– Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Wanting to be a blessing to someone else’s life is how I ended up in law school. I grew up watching my mom, who is a nurse, save lives and physically make people better every day. Her patients and their families were always so grateful. I thought it was amazing how one person can make such a difference in someone else’s life. With my mom as my inspiration, at age 16, I began working at a skilled nursing center. There, I saw the constant issues older adults faced with obtaining insurance/Medicare/Medicaid authorizations, staying in long term facilities versus going home, and the dramatic change in care based on socioeconomic status. It was then that I realized healthcare is multi-faceted and I did not have to be the one who was physically giving the care in order to be a blessing to someone else’s life.

I entered law school knowing I wanted to practice health law and never wavered from that decision. This summer, I was given the opportunity through the Martin Luther King, Jr (MLK) Internship Program to work for the Pennsylvania Health Law Project (PHLP). PHLP is a non-profit law firm that provides free legal advice and representation to help consumers access publicly funded health care coverage and services.

Until this summer, my work has mainly focused on healthcare advocacy and policy in relation to older adults. Interning at PHLP, my main goal was to learn about the complexity of Medicaid law, which I did. But I also learned so much more about health law and policy and how it relates to all areas of your life, including mortgage foreclosures and employment. For instance, I was able to assist a client in receiving a stair glide so she could ambulate in her home better. I also prepared for and conducted a fair hearing, where if skilled nursing hours were cut, it would have impacted the mother’s ability to work. Additionally, I reviewed various policy aspects of the Community Health Choices Plan as readiness review began and explored different areas of healthcare, including Autism and Brain Injury Advocacy.

I also was able to see the benefits our services had on our clients. Halfway through my internship, I had the opportunity to meet with a client whom PHLP had helped for years, most recently assisting his mother in creating a microboard. I had never heard of a microboard prior to

this summer, and was very grateful I took corporations as I researched it. When I met with the client, in my hometown nonetheless, I was able to see how the client and his mom benefited from the microboard and wrote an article about it which published in the PHLP June 2017 eNewsletter. Additionally, I presented to a large group of individuals who suffer from brain injury and their families at the Pennsylvania Brain Injury Conference and described how PHLP advocates for individuals with brain injuries. What I found is that many individuals do not know of all the services available to them or how to self-advocate. It was important to me to assist them in educating on the various services and the application process.

As I look towards my May graduation, I am grateful for this experience and will transfer the skills I acquired at PHLP. I handled my own case load, worked with state agencies, county assistance offices, and medical professionals. My favorite experience by far was conducting a fair hearing as a certified intern. I worked with the client, case managers, and read through medical records to build a case in support of my client. The day before the hearing I learned a valuable lesson, expect the unexpected when opposing counsel proposed a stipulation at the beginning of the fair trial. Neither I nor my supervisor saw that coming. Real life experiences like the ones I had at PHLP will benefit me throughout my legal career.

Health care is a fundamental right that affects everyone. In my prior work experience prior to law school I saw firsthand how healthcare is not created equal, in my position this summer I was able to help people make sure they were receiving proper services. In today's political climate where we are unsure of the future of Healthcare in America, I could not have been at a better placement this summer. I came to law school to practice health care law, and my decision has been reaffirmed by summer experience at PHLP. I work hard to be great and it is my hope that I was, in some way, able to be a blessing to someone else through my work at the PHLP.

Supriya Philips
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MidPenn Legal Services



Working at MidPenn Legal Services (MPLS) is a blessing. I'm not just saying that because it sounds good or because I need references. I say that because I mean it. MPLS taught me about what attorneys *actually* do and reminded me that everyone deserves help from others.

It's surprising that I never knew what an attorney did until now. After graduating from Temple University in 2015, I was unsure whether I should make the \$200,000 leap and attend law school. Friends, who were attorneys, would tell me that what students do in law school is nothing like what attorneys do in real life. They said the only way to understand what attorneys do in real life is to get experience. I decided to do just that.

After cold-calling and utilizing my family and school networks, I was blessed with an internship at a private law firm in Jenkintown, PA. During the internship, I worked on administrative matters. After working for a couple months, I accepted an offer for a full-time position at a law firm. When I negotiated my employment contract, I made my intentions clear; I want to know what attorneys do. I refused to do menial tasks, such as being a secretary, completing forms, or serving refreshments to the attorneys. Instead, I would gain legal experience working with the attorneys. I would learn something – something that I could use to help me get my next job.

That's not what happened. After entering into the Estate Planning Department, I was asked to digitize the firm's Will Safe. I spent weeks curled over a Xerox machine. I don't know if you, the reader, has ever dealt with estate planning documents, but you are not allowed to remove the staples. After I completed that task, I found myself begging other attorneys for more work. I developed new ways to store and organize the Will Safe. I helped a senior partner, who was leaving the firm, close his files. I also built estate planning and business organization binders. Long story short, I left that internship with no conception of what an attorney did. That changed when I began working at MPLS.

First, I was assigned intake. Attorney Fleck described the intake process as an investigation. At first, I didn't know what questions to ask because I didn't know what was important to know in family law. Soon, however, after working with Attorney Fleck and

Attorney Conforto, I slowly learned about the custody process. Both attorneys were wonderful teachers. They made sure I accompanied them to client interviews, custody conferences, and custody hearings. Attorney Matash introduced me to employment and bankruptcy law. Attorney Rich introduced me to landlord/tenant law. Besides learning about the law, I learned how to interact with clients, how to investigate different situations, how to manage my time, how to be detail-oriented, and how to interact with supervising attorneys. MPLS exposed me to what an attorney *actually* does.

MPLS also exposed me to helping those who have been turned down multiple times when they've asked for help. In Martin Luther King, Jr.'s sermon dealing with the drum major instinct, he preached that we should help others, not because it looks good or makes us seem cool, but because we can help others in love, justice, truth, and commitment to other, so that we can make the world a better place. I enjoyed reading the sermon. Attorney Rich once told me that, when I become an attorney, I'm not going to be better than anyone else in the world. I agree with him. And I shouldn't serve others because simply because it's virtuous, but because I can make the world a better place.

DeoKhee Ryu
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Philadelphia Legal Assistance



I was born and raised in Gwangju, South Korea until I moved to Seoul to go to college. Gwangju is the sixth biggest city of South Korea and is known as the symbolic city of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1980s. Growing up, I had the privilege to learn the history of the Korean Civil Rights Movement. This upbringing made me more conscious about civil rights and work to become a human rights lawyer.

From 1963 to 1979, South Korea was governed by a dictator, Jeong Hee Park, for more than 20 years until he was assassinated. Military General, Doo Hwan Chun, took over the power through a military coup d'état. Citizens of Gwangju, led by students, gathered in the streets to protest against Chun's power grab. As a response, Chun accused the protesters as rallies of the North Korean regime and started martial law sending the army to Gwangju to suppress the protest. The army allegedly killed 600 civilians, including innocent children and pregnant women, in just a few days, and thus, defeated the protests. This event is called 5/18 democratization movement.

At that time, my parents were teenagers. My mother told me stories of her experience during these protests. My mother said she lost friends by the army's actions and my grandparents even had to stack up sand bags on the walls so the bullets did not come through. Additionally, my grandmother made rice balls to give out to protestors for their lunch as a way of supporting the protest. Finally, after years of protests, in the 1990s, South Korea became a democratic nation with a democratically elected government.

Gwangju has become a symbolic city of the democratization movement since 5/18. To commemorate the sacrifice from these democratization protests, the city built the memorial park where I visited every year on school field trips. Growing up in Gwangju, I had more opportunities to learn the stories of political movements of South Korea through field trips, assignments, and family experience. Even in the early 1990s, I remember when my father drove me to kindergarten, we drove by protests and tear gas every day. These experiences taught me civil rights and equality are not something that I can take for granted but something I must fight for.

I naturally became interested in civil rights and grew up thinking what I can and should do to promote and advocate the equality among people. This summer, I worked in the Family Law Unit of Philadelphia Legal Assistance (PLA). My work was to provide legal advice regarding custody and Protection From Abuse (PFA) to *pro se* clients. Through this experience, I learned that empowering indigent clients is essential to promote equality among people.

During the training period, I had opportunities to observe family court hearings and was surprised to see that most people at the court hearings were not represented by an attorney. At the custody hearing, everyone had different reasons and stories of why they are trying to get custody of their children. At the PFA hearing, people had different experiences which made them scared for their safety and life.

However, people without lawyers had much more difficulties to deliver their stories before the judge. People did not know how to present the vital evidence to the judge or when to rebut the other party's story and tell their version of the story. This lack of ability to represent themselves in the court caused people to omit important parts of the story or significant physical evidence. Some people focused unnecessarily on irrelevant facts and expressed their emotion to the judge in an inappropriate way.

Unlike *pro se* parties, people represented by an attorney were undoubtedly better prepared for the hearing. For example, even the way people dressed in the court differed depending on whether they have a lawyer or not. As such, this imbalance of power to represent themselves in the court changed the outcome of the hearing. The legal terms and concepts used at the hearing could not be obvious to people who did not receive any legal education. These court observances taught me the importance of knowing the basic legal process and of educating *pro se* parties so they can advocate their rights before the court. The ability to represent their stories effectively before the court was the basic right that everyone should enjoy.

My job as a legal intern was to provide legal advice and relevant legal information to *pro se* clients whom the firm was not able to provide direct legal representation. I tried to explain to my clients the definition of legal terms and concepts that might come up at the court hearing and help them spot the important issues of the case.

One of my clients did not get the outcome that she expected from the first hearing before the custody master that I prepared her for. However, with the legal information that I provided her, she now knows how she can better prepare herself for the next hearing before the judge. I believe that the general legal information that I provided my clients will empower them and give

them guidance on how to prepare for court hearings and what to expect from the hearing like represented parties.

Through my work at PLA, I learned that empowering indigent clients will help to remove the disparity between represented and unrepresented parties in the courtroom. In a book “Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community,” Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote that “[t]he contemporary tendency in our society is to base our distribution on scarcity, which has vanished, and to compress our abundance into the overfed mouths of the middle and upper classes until they gag with superfluity. If democracy is to have breadth of meaning, it is necessary to adjust this inequity. It is not only moral, but it is also intelligent. We are wasting and degrading human life by clinging to archaic thinking.”

It is practically and realistically impossible to provide direct legal representation to all indigent clients. However, empowering indigent clients is an effective way to close this disparity between represented and unrepresented parties. I am grateful that I took part in empowering indigent clients to advocate for equality in legal rights through the MLK Internship Program. I would like to keep pursuing this path to close the inequality before the law by empowering indigent clients as a public interest lawyer.

Liam Thomas
Temple University, Beasley School of Law
J.D. Candidate 2018
Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project



The Little Things

"We all have the drum major instinct. We all want to be important, to surpass others, to achieve distinction, to lead the parade."

– Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

In the popular imagination, being a lawyer is all about the big moments. On TV shows, lawyers are shown cross-examining witnesses or giving closing arguments. Perhaps they'll show one aha moment when a lawyer finds that one document that wins his case. Even when prospective lawyers start law school, they start with the big moments. First-year law students learn the big cases—*Palzgraf*, *Marbury*, *Erie*, etc.—that shaped the modern legal landscape. What they don't learn about is all the work that went into those cases; the countless hours of preparation, discovery, and briefing that the lawyers had to go through before they even set foot in a courtroom.

During and right before my summer with the Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project (PILP), two big things happened in my personal life; I got engaged and was hired as a law clerk for the Honorable Susan E. Schwab post-graduation. While these big things happened, I continued to work every day at PILP, learning lots of little things about being a lawyer - how to depose a witness, how to write interrogatories, how to prove administrative exhaustion, and even how to use a scanner efficiently.

There were no big moments in my time at the PILP. Nothing happened that would fit well in the plot of a TV show. As I reflected on my summer, I thought about this lack of big moments in my internship juxtaposed with the big moments that occurred in my personal life. As I did so, I realized that my focus on the lack of big moments in my internship was due to what Dr. Martin Luther King called the drum major instinct. I wanted not just to do something good; I wanted to be praised for doing something good. I wanted big moments to point to for the praise of others and for my own ego. The more I thought about it, however, the more I realized that the lack of big moments did not make my work over the summer any less meaningful or rewarding.

I thought about the little things that led to those big moments in my personal life. The numerous drafts of cover letters that helped lead me to accepting a job with a federal judge. The text message I sent asking a pretty girl if she wanted to get a crepe that helped lead to me

proposing marriage on a rainy Sunday in May five years later. The big moments at the end may have done more to stoke my ego and appease my drum major instinct, but this did not make the smaller moments along the way any less meaningful.

And just like those smaller moments in my personal life, the work I did over the summer could lead to much bigger moments down the road. The time I spent reviewing boxes of medical records could help lead to vindication for a man who had been grievously shackled while in prison. The hours I spent going over security footage could help secure proper medical care for a man who had been brutally attacked by prison guards.

While the drum major instinct will always lead me to seek big moments, my summer at PILP helped teach me to value the little moments along the way just as much. Like the little things that led to me getting a clerkship or proposing marriage to the woman I love, the little things I did over my summer could lead to big moments down the road. Those little things I did along the way are not made any less meaningful for the fact that I will not be working at PILP when they culminate in big moments. I know that I can hold my head up high and say: “that I was a drum major for justice. Say that I was a drum major for peace. I was a drum major for righteousness.”

*Chandra Ulinfun
Suffolk University School of Law
J.D. Candidate 2018
Regional Housing Legal Services*



Out of Court Experiences

What do you think of when you hear the word “attorney?” I imagine words like “courtroom” and “trial” immediately come to mind. Unfortunately, it is easy to overlook the powerful role transactional attorneys play in the lives of their clients outside of the courtroom. Though transactional attorneys may not be in the courtroom zealously advocating on behalf of their client, they do advocate for their client in their specialized area of practice. This is especially true of the attorneys I worked with at Regional Housing Legal Services (RHLS). Their impact is felt by thousands of tenants across the state.

At first I thought RHLS was an organization that focused on landlord/tenant matters of Pennsylvania residents which is not the case. At RHLS, we provided legal representation to non-profits developing affordable and sustainable housing for low-income residents. To achieve this goal, we assisted these non-profit organizations through many phases of the project such as acquisition, leasing, partnership, etc. For me, that meant completing paperwork, paperwork, and more paperwork. The work could include applying for an Employer Identification Number (EIN) for a corporation, drafting assignment contracts, or drafting organization by-laws along with Board of Directors resolutions. There was never a dull day as I was able to learn so much about low-income tax credit housing.

The most memorable impression I have from RHLS is when I was able to attend the opening of one of the new affordable housing apartments in Montgomery County with one of my supervising attorneys. Many people attended the event including the housing developer and city officials. However, the most impactful thing for me was when I saw the apartment complex’s first tenant in attendance. There was pure joy emanating from her face as she listened to the speakers who were involved in the creation of her new home. She was also the one who cut the bow to the apartment therefore granting the official opening of the complex.

The building has 43 units and is in a nice neighborhood. It was also interesting to see how they were to utilize some of the building’s doors within the apartment complex since it was a former factory. Another interesting thing about the apartment itself is that will house a community art house and gallery. These were some of the things that encouraged me while I did

my work at RHLS. It is an awesome reminder that at the end of the long process of drafting paperwork, submitting proposals to the United States Department of House and Urban Development (HUD) and waiting for its approval to build the apartment complex, something greater is at the end; the chance for those in need of housing to live in a community that offers decent, safe, and affordable homes.

Advancing housing justice is one of the many initiatives of RHLS. For example, I helped prepare a fair housing training for developers and providers of supportive services in the housing units. I learned about how fair housing laws and HUD policies govern if and how housing developers can reserve rental units for certain populations such as homeless people with mental illness and ensuring that there is no disparate impact upon federally protected class members no matter intentionally or unintentionally if there are permissible reserved rooms. I also learned that by attending these types of policy presentations, developers make certain that all tenants across the state receive fair housing.

Ultimately, my experience at RHLS strengthened my interest in public interest work because I know that the work I did will help to create affordable homes for tenants. Outside of RHLS, there are so many facets of public interest law where people receive unjust treatment and there is never a wrong time to enter the field to help make a change. As Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “The time is always right to do what is right.”

Lauren Wilmer
Mercer University School of Law
J.D. Candidate 2018
Community Legal Services



My name is Lauren Wilmer and I am a current student at Mercer Law and a participant in the 2017 Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) Summer Internship Program. After considerable introspection and life experiences, I determined upon entering Mercer Law School that I would obtain a law degree to give a voice to the poor, the disfavored, the accused, the incarcerated, the condemned, and the children of our society. I have learned that, not only can I not tolerate injustice, I have a moral imperative to fight against it. Being an African-American female who seemingly escaped the societal and legal hurdles that are present in the lives of minorities, I find myself constantly being called to the drum major instinct; to serve others and fight against injustice.

This past summer, I worked for Community Legal Services (CLS), an organization dedicated to creating a systematic impact for individuals who could otherwise not afford legal services through direct representation, systemic advocacy, and community education. My work with the Housing Unit of CLS allowed me to represent private, public, and subsidized housing tenants in matters involving eviction, illegal lockouts, and substandard housing concerns. Essentially, our office, for many of our clients, is the last line of defense before they and their families are faced with being homeless. In most cases, we had clients come to us for legal help and representation minutes before their eviction case was scheduled to be heard in the Municipal Courts of Philadelphia.

During my second week working at CLS, I met a client who greatly impacted the rest of my time at CLS. This client was facing eviction from public housing due to her criminal record and non-payment of rent. This is a common issue for clients at CLS as most face barriers to public housing due to arrest and criminal records. This client had multiple arrests and convictions that were reflected on her criminal history from years ago. As my client held her two kids in her arm, she stated, "I am more than what that paper says I am, I am...and I just need a place for my kids and I to live."

My client's statement served to remind me of two important lessons. First, the fact that my client, and many more in her circumstances, are forced to defend their past mistakes constantly. We are all more than our worst mistakes and the clients that CLS serves are no

different. However, they are forced to fight against society's judgement of their past every day no matter how much they have changed and progressed. That day, I promised myself as I continue my work in public interest, I would not allow my client's past mistakes to define my perception of who they are presently.

Secondly, there is a continued need for housing reform across the nation. Philadelphia is not unlike most major cities across the nation with numerous barriers to accessing affordable and safe housing for those who live in poverty. Our nation's cities have become unaffordable for our poorest families. "[I]t is hard to argue that housing is not a fundamental human need. Decent, affordable housing should be a basic right for everybody in this country. The reason is simple: without stable shelter, everything else falls apart" Matthew Desmond, author of *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. My client, without stable shelter, could not adequately address any other needs of her family. Education and employment all were unobtainable without stable shelter. In my time at CLS, I learned most of my clients either simply did not know their housing rights or knew their rights and what it would cost if they exercised them. Landlords routinely retaliate, illegally locking tenants out, refusing to do repairs, or anything to make the tenants home threatened. Housing reform will take real advocacy, direct representation, and protection for the poorest of tenants.

My time serving my clients at CLS showed me the need for those with the drum major instinct to use their talents and energy to combat the housing crisis occurring in cities across the nation. It will take those with a spirit of service and a commitment of justice to educate and advocate for housing rights reform in cities across the nation.

Elizabeth Wolfe
Duquesne University School of Law
J.D. Candidate 2018
Laurel Legal Services



“If I can help somebody as I pass along, if I can cheer somebody with a word or a song, if I can show somebody he’s traveling wrong, then my living will not be in vain.”

– Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

My name is Elizabeth Wolfe and I am a current law student attending Duquesne University School of Law and participant in the 2017 Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK), Summer Internship Program. This summer, I had the opportunity of interning at the Johnstown office of Laurel Legal Services (LLS). During my time at LLS, I dealt primarily with Protection from Abuse (PFA), custody, landlord/tenant, and unemployment compensation (UC) clients. I had no idea how much I would thoroughly enjoy providing equal access to justice at a non-profit, public-interest law firm.

What led me to apply to the MLK Summer Internship Program was my time spent at the Duquesne University School of Law Family Law Clinic working with clients below the 150% poverty line. My clinical experience opened my eyes widely to the dire need of underserved clients to have attorneys advocating on behalf of their rights. After seeing the internship posting on our Career Services website through the law school, I realized early on that a summer position in legal aid was for me. From the clinic, I had a basic idea of what I would do in a position in legal aid for the summer.

Family law is the area of law that truly holds my passion. Not everyone shares the passion for family law that I have but some find this type of law truly fulfilling. During my undergraduate degree and early on in law school, I started to realize that this was one area to which I am truly devoted because of my ability to help individuals in need through difficult periods in their everyday lives. LLS gave me further insight into the issues that the citizens in my own hometown deal with every day, custody and otherwise.

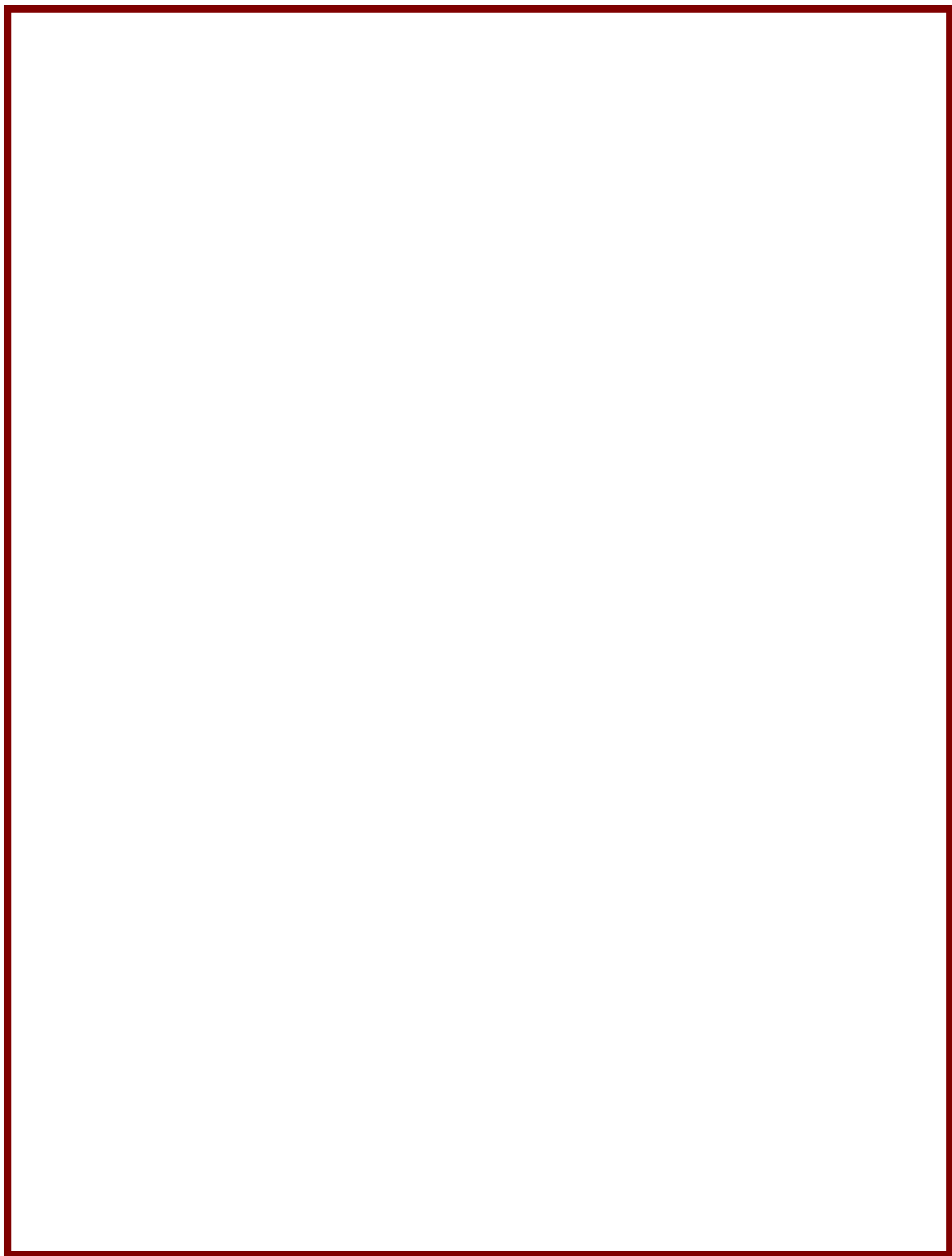
At LLS, I also had the opportunity to help interview clients for any type of brief or extended service cases that brought the client into the office. I learned by accompanying and observing the attorneys from LLS during UC hearings, custody pre-trials and/or full custody hearings, and Protection From Abuse (PFA) hearings. This is the type of experience that I did not receive in law school and I do believe the Courtroom experience is a vital part of my education.

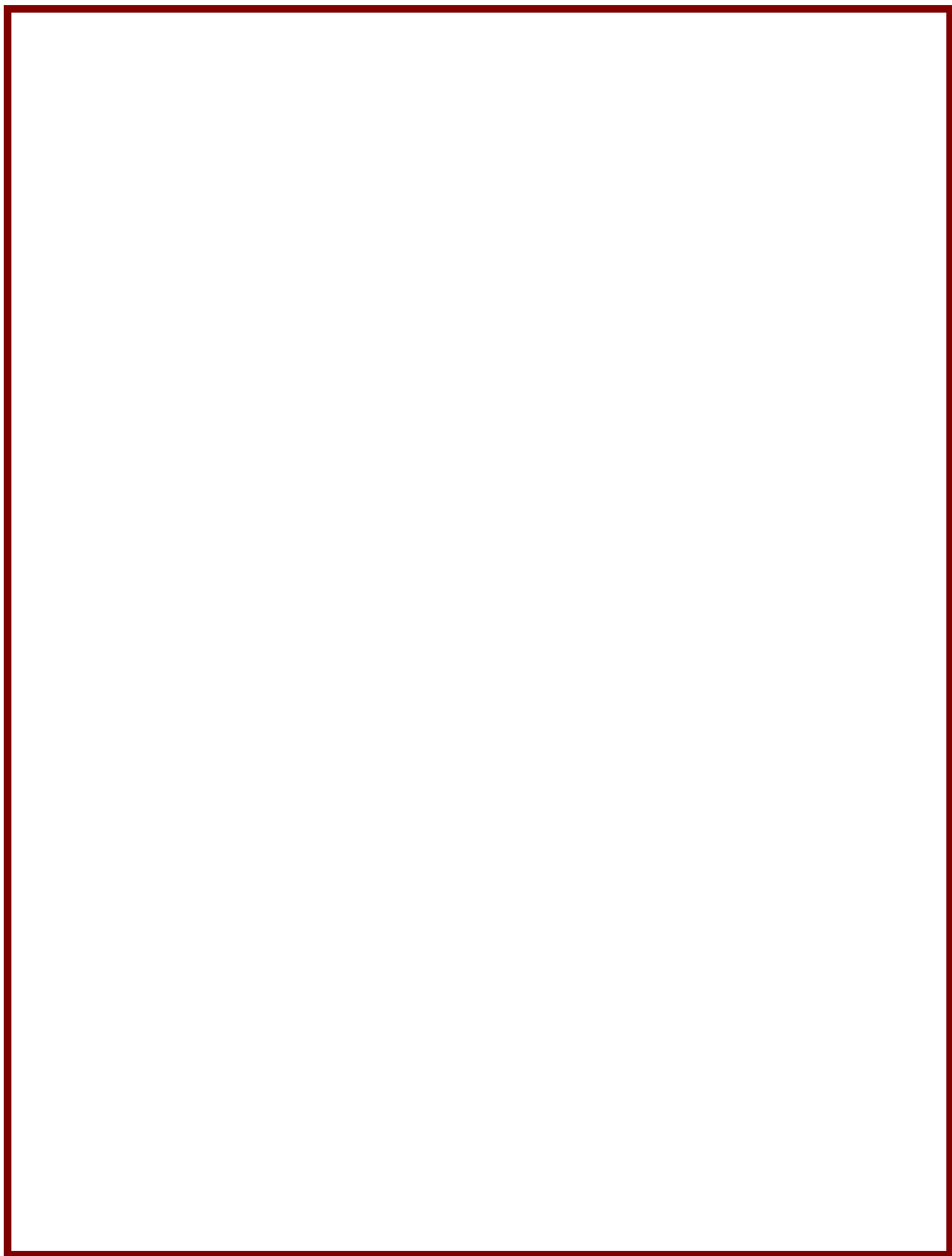
At LLS, we also had many clients battling landlord/tenant issues, general bankruptcy questions, and mortgage foreclosures.

Over the course of the summer, I completed two flow-charts that will serve as handouts to clients who come into the office seeking legal advice or assistance. These flow charts consisted of the basic laws and practice of family law and landlord/tenant law for Cambria County. The purpose of these two flow-charts is to help clients to better understand what they have already gone through or what may be coming next in the process of their legal dilemmas. I also researched many other family law issues, unemployment compensation issues, and foreign law issues pertaining to landlord/tenant law.

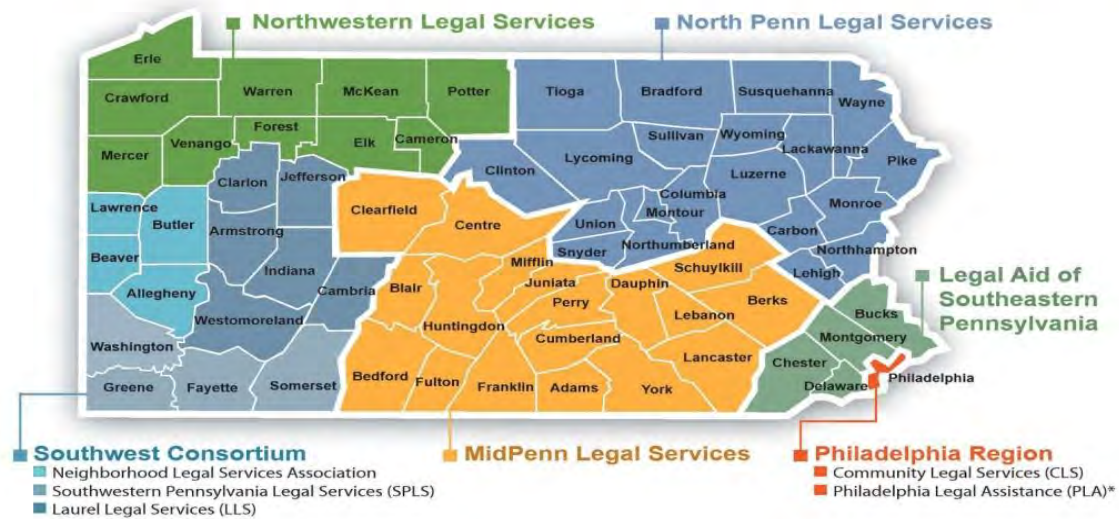
The clients that I helped assist at LLS this summer did not cause or contribute to their own struggles. I enjoyed working in public interest this summer and being able to make a small difference in the lives of the clients that I served and also gaining valuable hands on experience at the same time. The individuals that find themselves in need of LLS do not have the means to individually help themselves and providing assistance to them helps to make them feel like they too have a voice. Clients come to LLS because they are unable to afford a local attorney to assist them during the difficult times in their lives. If legal aid did not exist, these citizens would be at risk of losing their children, homes, income, and so much more.

Although I grew up in the Cambria County area, I did not suffer through or understand the same struggles as the clients that I have served this summer. I have learned over the course of the summer to pay more attention to the people directly affected by injustice in the community in which we live. I realized quickly that it wasn't the efficiency of the representation we provided to clients that made them happy and put a smile on their face during this difficult time, it was the fact that they had someone standing in their corner representing them at all that changed their outlook. Furthermore, working in a public interest office through the summer helped me to feel like I was giving back to the county in which I was raised in, helping the people who needed it most. I hope that in my future after law school I find a position that makes me feel as though I am helping people to see the better days ahead when they can advocate for themselves, as they are suffering through the dark days in their lives.





Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network (PLAN)



Regional Programs

Community Legal Services
 Laurel Legal Services
 Legal Aid of Southeastern Pennsylvania
 MidPenn Legal Services
 Neighborhood Legal Services Association
 North Penn Legal Services
 Northwestern Legal Services
 Philadelphia Legal Assistance
 Southwestern Pennsylvania Legal Services

Specialty Programs

Community Justice Project
 Friends of Farmworkers
 Pennsylvania Health Law Project
 Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project
 Pennsylvania Utility Law Project
 Regional Housing Legal Services

Pennsylvania
Legal Aid Network

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