

Judicial Internship with Chancellor Jeffery F. Stewart  
Tonya Executive Summary

During the summer of 2010, I was intern to Chancellor Stewart of the Tennessee Twelfth Judicial district in Winchester, Tennessee. While Chancellor Stewart and his assistant Judy served as my primary supervisors, I spent time in General Sessions, Circuit, and Drug court, where I was able to interact and learn from multiple other judges. I also spent time with both the district attorneys and the public defenders, discovering more about how cases are prosecuted, defended and more often than not, concluded before a preliminary hearing can occur. I was privileged to experience what happens within the court, and I was also given an opportunity to learn more about what happens behind the scenes, as I spent time in the Circuit Court Clerk's Office as well as the Clerk and Master's Office. Throughout my time at the Franklin County Judicial Center, I was able to discover more about the members of the Franklin County Sheriff's Department, who work within the building. Befriending these individuals proved to be helpful, considering that they seemed to know more about what was going on in some instances than the attorneys. I was offered plenty of helpful advice during my internship, but these guards provided some of the best. This is not to say that the attorneys whom I met were not helpful, kind, and beneficial. Through attending Civil Court, Criminal Court, Juvenile Court, plea and assignment day, and Chancellery Court, I was able to meet multiple attorneys and observe them in action.

While I was given multiple tasks during the progression of my internship, I was urged to spend much of my time observing in court. I learn about the docket call which is made at the beginning of each session of Criminal, Juvenile, Civil and Chancellery Court. The Criminal Court included a regular docket as well as a review, bond, and jail line up section of the docket. Civil Court began with Probate matters and then brought up Open and Sworn Accounts, Orders of Protection and Detainer Warrants. Juvenile Court separated custody matters, which were discussed in the morning, from delinquent matters, which were brought up in the afternoon. Juvenile and Chancellery Court both are Judge driven courts while Civil and Criminal rely more heavily on the District Attorney. Circuit Court can depend on the case, considering several of these cases are decided by a jury, while others are decided by the Judge. The Grand Jury convened during my internship and it would have been exciting to have been able to observe this process, however this court was closed to the public.

I had many expectations for this internship this summer. I expected to have assigned duties, while having an opportunity to observe. I expected to come away from the internship with a great knowledge of both the legal system and how the Courthouse itself functioned. I admit that I had high expectations for this internship and I am pleased that it was able to appease all of these. Not only did this internship affirm my aspiration to enter into the field of law, but it ignited my aspiration to become a Judge. This internship has contributed greatly to my understanding and enthusiasm of this political system.