This summer, I interned with the Honorable Mikell R. Scarborough at the Charleston County Master-in-Equity Court in Charleston, South Carolina from June 15, 2013 - August 15, 2013.

I gained exposure to various hearings that came in front of the Judge, including: Quiet Titles, Supplementary Proceedings, final trials, Motions to Summary Judgment, and Foreclosures. Working side-by-side with the judge, I have been exposed to everything from different tactics lawyers use to defend their case, the implications that arise in foreclosures, sales, and the set procedure used in trials.

Of my many tasks, one of the most significant was my duty in preparing all of the files that the judge used for each hearing. The courthouse has a file room containing thousands of files, some marking back as early as 2008. Every day, it was my duty to go to the file room and pull the files of the cases we were to hear that day. This experience taught me how important it is to be organized- as both an intern and a lawyer. I found that the most efficient lawyers had everything presented neatly and organized as opposed to the lawyers who were scrambling to gather all the necessary paperwork while simultaneously trying to represent their client’s best interests. During court, lawyers present pieces of evidence, acknowledged as exhibits, and they often submit up to twenty exhibits to the court reporter. While examining and cross-examining various witnesses, lawyers must reference the exhibits they submit to the court. Organization is important here because the judge must be able to easily follow along with the lawyer’s argument; this may only be done when the lawyer provides the judge with an ordered file of every piece of evidence that is also offered to the witness. The cases that come forth to the judge are not easily
tangible, and require immense analysis of family history to, for example, determine right to property and appraisals. Thus, organization is immensely important in being able to effectively enforce a fair verdict.

Judge Scarborough’s law clerk, Spencer Craig, was able to serve as a beneficial resource to me as well. She has just recently graduated from the Charleston School of Law and offered me advice on the LSAT, the Bar exam, private versus public practice, etc. I have learned that, unless I attend a top-tier law school (top 15 ranked), I should attend a law school in my home state for financial and networking reasons. I have also learned that certain law schools teach material specifically for that state’s Bar Exam, whereas others teach more holistically with the purpose of preparing the student regardless of which state’s Bar they take. For example, South Carolina only has two law schools, and while USC Law prepares for the South Carolina Bar, Charleston School of Law prepares the student so that they may take the Bar in a state other than South Carolina. I have also leaned that the state in which I am going to law school is likely to be the state that I will be preparing for the Bar. I would like to settle in either the Northeastern region of the country or in California. Thus, I will be looking into The University of Michigan School of Law, Georgetown Law, University of Chicago Law School, and, ideally, Berkeley or Stanford Law School.

The internship affirmed my career goals. I found myself giddy with excitement to buy legal pads, filling the pages with everything from inspiring phrases lawyers used in the courtroom to lists of dream law schools to what I found effective in various lawyers’ tactics. I am so incredibly thankful to have had this experience. Aligned with many of the trials that occurred
this summer (Zimmerman v. State of Florida, DOMA, Prop 8), I was able to fully analyze and
learn more about the judicial system, on both a district and national level. I feel a renewed sense
of appreciation for the judicial system and the respect to procedure that the system upholds.
While I am not yet sure if I will pursue real estate and foreclosure law, the experiences within
this concentration were especially helpful in gaining experience about legal codes and South
Carolina law. Ideally, I would like to see myself pursuing corporate litigation. However, I also
acknowledge that the type of law I practice fully depends on the credibility of the law school I
attend and the area in which I am settled; for example, Charleston is a saturated area for lawyers
and many are currently struggling to find work.