

Executive Summary

As an intern in the chambers of Arkansas Supreme Court Justice Robert L. Brown, I performed the duties of a law clerk. On Friday, I would begin reading the briefs submitted by the attorneys representing both parties in a case. After reading the briefs, I would research the legal issue presented in the case by reading any statutes or rules involved in the case as well as numerous opinions issued in similar cases by the Arkansas Supreme Court on Westlaw. When I was researching an area of law which had not been fully developed in Arkansas, I would read the opinions issued by other state and federal courts in similar cases as well as any articles on the issue which were published by journals or law reviews. On Mondays and Tuesdays, the interns, clerks, and the administrative assistant would meet with Justice Brown to discuss the cases we were working on. By noon each Wednesday, I would submit a bench memorandum to Judge Brown in which I presented the facts of the case, explained the arguments of each party in the case, analyzed the legal arguments which were made, and, based upon my legal analysis, stated how the case should be decided. On Thursday mornings, the court would hear oral arguments, and, on Thursday afternoons, the justices would conference the cases. After conference, the interns, clerks, and administrative assistant would meet with Justice Brown to discuss what the court decided to do in each case. After meeting with Justice Brown, the office would work on drafting any opinions Justice Brown was writing. During the drafting process, I would proofread opinions for clarity and grammar. After the opinions had been drafted, they would be circulated to each of the seven justices. When an opinion in a case I had researched arrived in Justice Brown's chambers, I would read the opinion and discuss it with Justice Brown. We would

consider whether he should join the opinion, whether there was an aspect of the case which merited greater emphasis, and whether he should write a concurrence or write a dissent.

By researching a case and preparing a bench memorandum each week, I became familiar with how to perform legal research on Westlaw, and I was able to learn about a variety of legal matters. Over the course of my internship I researched lesser-included offenses, separation of powers as it relates to procedural and substantive law, when it is proper to treat a writ of prohibition as a writ of certiorari, admissibility of prior offenses at trial, concerns of remoteness affecting the admissibility of prior offenses at trial, procedural and substantive law, constitutionality of Arkansas' school funding system, whether, under specific circumstances, repression of memory tolls the statute of limitations, parental immunity, and fiduciary duty as it relates to fraudulent concealment.

In addition, I was able to learn about the appeals process and the structure and procedures of the Arkansas Supreme Court, attend the annual meeting of the Arkansas Bar Association, network with many individuals involved in the Arkansas legal system, and learn about various programs in the state such as Access to Justice and Teen Court.

Before my internship, I knew that I would attend law school, but I did not know what I would do immediately after law school and was not familiar with the job of a law clerk. During the course of my internship I realized what a critical role clerks play in the judicial system, from providing justices with the initial briefing on the facts of a case to drafting the written opinion. After graduating from law school, I intend to serve as a law clerk for a federal judge or a justice on a state supreme court.