

## Tonya Affair's Summary of the 12<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Internship with Chancellor Stewart

Over the summer, I interned for Chancellor Stewart within the 12<sup>th</sup> Judicial District of Tennessee. Within this internship, I formed a well-rounded understanding of what a rural Judicial System really consists of. I was able to work with many different groups of people within the 12<sup>th</sup> Judicial District including but not limited too: General Sessions Court, Drug Court, Chancery Court, Franklin County Sheriff's Department, County Clerk's Office, Public Defender's Office, and the District Attorney's Office. Chancellor Stewart also gave the opportunity to be able to attend different types of court cases throughout my eight week internship with him. I traveled to Tracy City and Jasper, Tennessee, to watch court cases involving land disputes involving normal land holders facing the State of Tennessee as well as rape cases within Franklin County. The duties I held during this internship varied due to the fact I was moving from different places and meeting different people daily. Chancellor Stewart gave me certain materials to read so that I could understand what exactly was going on during certain cases I was observing. I also helped different people with filing or locating people within the courthouse. My main responsibility was to observe the different organizations I worked for, do the jobs they asked me to do, and decide whether I could see working with them as my future occupation.

I believe that my favorite part within the internship would have been working with the Drug Court of Franklin County. I interned there for a week, and during that time I was

able to see how the rehabilitation programs worked to help keep convicts out of jail. The women who worked there showed me how they do house checkups to make sure that the people within the program are obeying the policies, how the drug tests were read that they administered when people came in, and also how the hearings for Drug Court were held on an individual basis. People who have large drug charges against them have the option of participating in Drug Court. Once a person accepts this offer, they have to come into the office every three days to take a drug test. They are also made aware that there will be house checkups. During these checks, the women have the option of searching the home and giving you a drug test on the spot. Also, people who are in this program are not able to drink alcohol as well. While to many people this may seem ridiculous, but the difference in addicts lives that these people are making is phenomenal. During this internship, I watched children be taken into state custody due to the fact that their parents could not stop taking drugs. Within the Drug Court program, I watched sober people flourish and I saw how appreciative the people who run Drug Court were. They allowed me to be a part of helping addicts stay out of trouble which made me feel as if I was really making a difference. This was one of the most positive experiences of my internship. Through Chancellor Stewart's internship, I was also able to go on a ride along with the Franklin County Investigations Unit. I went on an arson investigation with two investigators. I found this to be really intriguing. I was able to see firsthand how these investigations work as well as what clues to look for to find a guilty culprit. The two investigators I worked with showed me a lot of tricks of the trade as well as told me stories of what they had seen as law enforcement. This gave me a better understanding of how the Sheriff's Department worked as well as helped

me see the community from a different perspective. These are just two of the things that I truly enjoyed about my internship with Chancellor Stewart.

Throughout my internship, I sat through many court cases. This proved to be a daunting task later in the afternoons, but I found that it was really helpful in my experience. I mostly watched General Sessions Court with Judge Farris. I found that it was not much fun to watch Traffic Court in the mornings. If there were not different types of cases being seen throughout the day, it was easy to get bored or distracted. Even though I did catch myself becoming bored with watching similar court cases, I found that Chancellor Stewart really helped me open my eyes to career paths I would have wanted to take but now would no longer be interested in. Chancellor Stewart and Mrs. Clark, his secretary, were both great at helping me figure out what I wanted my next career goal to be. They both took time out of their busy schedule to help me weigh my options.

As far as my career options are concerned, I found that I am not so much interested in being a lawyer or judge. I am not one who really enjoys reading, which I found to be a major part of both of the two occupations, but I did find that I truly enjoyed Drug Court. From my experiences with this internship, I believe that I am going to become a therapist for people who have been addicts. I want to continue to be incorporated with the judicial system in a similar way that Drug Court is. There are times in which one has to sit in court, but it is not as many hours as say a lawyer. The difference that these people made in the lives of people in my community was amazing to say the least. I believe that I am going to go get my Masters in Social Work, and then find a job in which I can do things similar to what I viewed in Drug Court.