

Bevin Williams
Executive Summary for Internship Report

This past summer I worked as an intern for the Honorable Bobby Sands in the Maury County General Sessions Court in Columbia, TN. While there, my main activity was observation and discussion with Judge Sands after every docket. In General Sessions Court there is everything from minor traffic violations to first-degree murder. I was able to observe every case, go with the District Attorney's office when they came in to see how they handled state witnesses, see what goes in to the "plea-bargaining" process, and watch how the judge sentenced various crimes. I also was able to observe how the public defenders' office handled their enormous caseloads and worked with a variety of witnesses and crimes when in court.

This type of court is not the typical court you see on TV. This is the arraignment court. To handle your case in this court after arraignment, or appearances, you can either plead to the alleged crime or a lesser defense, and have the judge sentence you; you can have a preliminary trial to see if there is enough probable cause or evidentiary support to warrant a trial; or, you can bind your case over to circuit court where the grand jury will meet and choose to either indict you or dismiss the case. If you are indicted you will then have a traditional jury trial.

Some of my duties in court were to make copies of dispositions, fax mittimus to the county jail, run documents between the court and the clerk's offices, cross check dockets and warrants to ensure a correct arraignment and preliminary trial, write subpoenas to officers and witnesses, organize probation records, assist with the planning of office events, and check on completion of Responsible Living Seminars (for shop lifting offenders) and domestic violence classes.