

Over the course of two months this past summer, I had the opportunity to intern in the Maryland Office of the Public Defender. The Office of the Public Defender is a public service set up by the State of Maryland in order to comply with the United States Supreme Court Ruling on *Gideon v. Wainwright* 372 U.S. 335 (1963). The Office of the Public Defender provides legal services for those who have been charged with a crime but who lack the means to afford legal counsel. The Office of the Public Defender provides counsel for all crimes whether they be misdemeanor or felony. It also provides continuing legal assistance, and will provide legal counsel for appellants. During my internship, I worked in both the Felony Trial division and the Appellate division of the Office of the Public Defender. While in the trial division, my responsibilities were relatively simple. I would, on most mornings, work alongside Rosemary M. Ranier, an attorney in the Felony Trial division. Often this meant going with her to one of the two Baltimore courthouses while she acted as defense counsel for a number of individuals. Often I would sit in on reception court where both the defense and the state would appear and opt to either go to trial, in which case the judge would attempt to find a court room for the case. During my time in the Felony Trial division I also went to arraignment hearings, where the charges would be read and a trial date would be set, and once went to a bail review where the state and the defense would both state what they thought an individual's bail should be and then gave reasons for the amount to be set at that number. In the afternoons, I occasionally would watch trials, but, more often, I would be asked to assist with a case in some manner. This included, but was not limited to watching and then transcribing depositions, witness (or victim) statements, or police videos, as well as, reading through the state's discovery (evidence that the state had and was disclosing to the defense) and finding additional evidence that would be helpful to the defense's case. Once I moved to the Appellate division, I worked primarily with Brad Peabody

(C' 71) on a number of his cases, although I also worked with Juan Reyes on a single case. My responsibilities within the Appellate division grew as time went on. Initially my only work was finding cases that would be helpful in winning an appeal, but I later was given more responsibility.

My projects within the Appellate division primarily involved doing case research for Mr. Peabody. Initially my work required me to find relevant cases to an issue. The way that this would work was that Mr. Peabody would give me a topic, such as admissibility of evidence, and I would be asked to find cases and legal language that would define what evidence was admissible, and how exactly courts had ruled on admissibility of evidence. I was usually asked to find both sides of an issue so that Mr. Peabody would be able to better know and successfully counter the State's argument. Once I had a grasp of legal research and once I had read enough briefs to understand how they were written, I was given the task of writing a brief myself. This was both my most challenging and rewarding assignment. I was given the transcript for a case and was asked to write an appellate brief. This meant that I had to read through the transcript, identify an issue that could be raised for appeal and then research the judicial treatment of that issue. During each of these steps I would clear my progress with Mr. Peabody who would either approve or offer suggestions as to how I could improve my research. I then compiled the fruits of this research into a document that described the issue at trial that warranted an appeal as well as the legal precedent upon which the appeal is based. This was a particularly challenging because the brief would be submitted to Maryland Court of Special Appeals, and as a result it had to be comprehensive and well written. Each day I would write a new draft, which often included additional research and submit it to Mr. Peabody. Drafting this brief was difficult, but was incredibly rewarding as I could see tangible evidence of my work. Also while I was interning in

the Appellate division, I was able to go to the Court of Special Appeals in Annapolis and hear a number of cases argued. This too was an excellent experience as it allowed me to better understand what was required of an appellate lawyer.

This internship was incredibly useful in that it helped me to develop a better career plan. I had wanted to be a lawyer prior to this internship, but I did not understand as much about the profession as I do now. During this internship I was introduced to lawyers who specialized in a variety of fields, which gave me a better sense of the different paths one can take with a law degree. I was also given valuable advice about attending law school and many of the lawyers with whom I spoke explained the value of finding a mentor early in one's career. In terms of my own personal career goals, this internship was valuable in that it absolutely made me want to become a lawyer. It did, however, make me more comfortable about taking time off before law school, as many of the lawyers with whom I talked mentioned that they had taken that path and felt as if they had made a good choice. I also found the work in the Maryland Office of the Public Defender incredibly interesting. I think that this internship greatly helped me in terms of shaping my career path and how I plan to proceed after Sewanee. Working at the Maryland Office of the Public Defender was also, for me especially helpful as public defense was a field of law that I had never really considered before. This internship, however, showed me not only how important criminal defense is, especially for those without the means to afford it, but also that every person deserves legal representation so that they might go through the legal process with the due process that one is constitutionally entitled to.