

The Pre-Law e-Newsletter from Pre-Professional Programs & Advising

Best viewed in HTML

Vol. 2, No. 6

Monday, November 24, 2008 – Sunday, November 30, 2008

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1. Message from Ana L. Droscoski, Esq.
 2. Internship Opportunity: U.S. Department of Labor
 3. Practice Area Focus: Labor Law
 4. Practitioner Interview: Francine A. Serafin, U.S. Department of Labor Trial Attorney
 5. Upcoming Pre-Law Meetings and Program Announcements
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1. MESSAGE FROM ANA L. DROSCOSKI, ESQ.

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday!

Current applicants, please remember to keep me posted on your outcomes.

Note that this will be the final Pre-Law e-Newsletter of 2008. Best wishes for a strong finish to this semester.

Look for the next Pre-Law e-Newsletter in 2009!

2. INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Student Internship Program provides students with the opportunity to learn about how federal government agencies operate and to interact with the leaders of various agencies within DOL.

Students can participate in weekly brown bag lunch discussions, attend agency presentations, and work on projects assigned to them by their agency. Previous interns have had opportunities to work in a variety of areas including public affairs, speechwriting, and outreach programs. Students will also be delegated general administrative duties and should have strong writing and research skills.

Applying to DOL's Internship Program

Completed application materials must be submitted to Stephanie Terek, DOL Intern Coordinator, prior to the following deadlines:

Spring 2009 — Applications for the spring internship program are now being accepted. The spring program runs from approximately January-April.

For more information, visit: http://www.dol.gov/_sec/media/internprogram.htm

Or contact:

Stephanie Terek

Internship Coordinator

terek.stephanie@dol.gov

202-693-6071 - Phone

202-693-6147 - Fax

3. PRACTICE AREA FOCUS: LABOR LAW

The goal of labor laws is to equalize the bargaining power between employers and employees. The laws primarily deal with the relationship between employers and unions. Labor laws grant employees the right to unionize and allows employers and employees to engage in certain activities (e.g. strikes, picketing, seeking injunctions, lockouts) so as to have their demands fulfilled.

The area of labor law is governed by federal law, state law and judicial decisions. It is also governed by regulations and decisions of administrative agencies. States are preempted from interfering with federal statutory law or with the guidelines promulgated by agencies established under federal law or by the U.S. Constitution. See U.S. Constitution, Art. VI. (<http://topics.law.cornell.edu/wex/labor>)

4. PRACTITIONER INTERVIEW: FRANCINE A. SERAFIN, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR TRIAL ATTORNEY

Francine A. Serafin, Esq. has been a trial attorney with the U. S. Department of Labor, Office of the Regional Solicitor, in Arlington, VA since 2000. Ms. Serafin represents the Department of Labor in complex litigation matters, enforcing various federal labor statutes against employers including the Mine Safety and Health Act (MSHA), Service Contract Act (SCA), Davis Bacon Act (DBA), Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), and the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA). Ms. Serafin independently handles complex cases in all phases of trial litigation, trains junior attorneys, and instructs agency litigation representatives on how to conduct litigation. In addition, she is the designated office liaison between management and staff attorneys regarding any personnel issues or concerns.

Ms. Serafin obtained her J.D., with honors, from American University, Washington College of Law, and her B.A., cum laude, with a double major in Political Science and History, from Rutgers University, Rutgers College, where she was a member of the Cap & Skull Honor Society.

Ms. Serafin is a member of the Maryland State Bar.

Questions

Describe a day in the life of a U.S. Department of Labor Trial Attorney:

I usually spend most days in the office, but my job does require travel for depositions or for hearings approximately every other month. On the days I am in the office, I answer emails, draft litigation documents, conduct research and negotiate either with opposing counsel or my clients to settle cases. I spend a lot of time writing and on the phone. The projects I work on change from day to day because I have a caseload over 50; all involve different types of labor law statutes. One day I might be working on an OSHA case, the next day an ERISA case. Our cases usually settle, but the ones that do not, move to a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge or in federal court. I handle all trials set in any case assigned to me. Essentially, I do the opening statement, direct examinations and cross examinations of witnesses, etc. At the end of the trial, I write a brief summarizing our case and the testimony and wait for a written decision from the judge.

What initially attracted you to this field? What are some of the rewards of this area of law?

I was attracted to the field because I was a political science major in college and law seemed like the next logical step after graduating from college. I was fascinated by lawyers on television. You quickly learn that what you see on TV is not really reality, but I still found myself intrigued by the issues that the law presents and attempts to solve. I also love debating issues, and I get to do that pretty much all day, every day now in my job. The reward for me is that I feel that I am protecting workers who aren't protected by their employers properly, whether in cases where they don't provide the safety equipment they should be providing, or they are not paying properly. In those cases, the DOL steps in and takes the company to task for failing to do what they are required to do.

What are some of the downsides of this area of law?

As I indicated earlier, what you see on TV and in movies is not what the profession is really like. It can be very tedious sometimes arguing over little nuances in language, in documents or in settlements, etc. I also don't like sometimes having to be the "bad guy" and telling my client they have to take a less than favorable settlement because we didn't gather all of the evidence we needed to prove our case. This is

especially difficult in cases where a worker was injured or killed. To tell the family that the government had to give in to an employer on a settlement in those cases is tough.

Do you have any advice for an undergraduate interested in pursuing this body of law?

I think you should definitely do your homework. If you want to be a lawyer, that's great, but learn about what a lawyer really does. Learn about law firm work, government work, non-profit work, etc., so that you can decide early on what you want to do and find out what the day-to-day experience is like. I know too many people who went to law school and spent a lot of money for the degree who discovered too late that "being a lawyer" was not what they are happy doing, and it is not for them. Law school is very expensive, so do your research on how to make it affordable. Look into state schools and other ways to save money so you aren't as burdened with loans when you leave.

Contact Information

If you would like to learn more about labor law, or have additional questions for Ms. Serafin, you may contact her directly via email at serafin.francine@dol.gov.

5. UPCOMING PRE-LAW MEETINGS AND PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

LSAT Administration for 2008/2009

Location: On campus, Hodson 110 - check with LSDAS for additional testing locations

Date: Saturday, December 6, 2008 & Saturday, February 7, 2009

Time: Registration begins at 8:30a - consult with LSDAS for all controlling details

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**STAFF IN THE OFFICE OF PRE-PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS AND ADVISING**

Ana L. Droskoski, J.D., Assistant Director, who advises Pre-Law students:

Walk-ins: Monday/Thursday 10:00a - 11:30a

Appointments: Monday/Thursday 2:00p - 4:00p

Wednesday 10:00a - 11:30a & 2:00p - 3:00p

David Verrier, Ph.D., Director, who advises Pre-Health students:

Walk-ins: Wednesday/Friday 10:00a - 12:00p

Kirsten Kirby, M.S.Ed., Assistant Director, who advises Pre-Health students:

Walk-ins: Tuesday 10:00a - 12:00p & Wednesday 1:30p - 3:30p

The Administrative Coordinators are available to answer questions and schedule appointments:

Lena Harding, Administrative Secretary, [lhardin7@jhu.edu](mailto:lhardin7@jhu.edu) 410-516-6743

For students whose last name begins with A-G, contact Ms. Harding.

Carolyn Mae Krause, Administrative Coordinator, [ckrause@jhu.edu](mailto:ckrause@jhu.edu) 410-516-6744

For students whose last name begins with H-O, contact Mrs. Krause.

LaTonia Sanders, Administrative Coordinator, [ladytee@jhu.edu](mailto:ladytee@jhu.edu) 410-516-4140

For students whose last name begins with P-Z, contact Mrs. Sanders.

Angie Decker, Office Manager and Staff Supervisor, [decker@jhu.edu](mailto:decker@jhu.edu)

Please feel free to use the resource library between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. everyday or visit our website <http://web.jhu.edu/prepro/> for additional information.