INTERNSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Breanna Tomsey

Graduation Semester & Year: Spring 2024
Semester & Year of Internship: Fall 2022
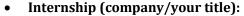**Major**: Public Policy
Minor: Legal Psychology   **Hometown**: Chicora, PA
Hobbies: Listening to music, reading, hanging out with family and friends
Campus Activities: Student Government, Residence Life, OACS, Honors Program
Future Plans/Career Goals: Law School/ Attorney

- **Internship (company/your title):**
    - Judge Christopher A. Feliciani Chambers; Westmoreland County Courthouse
    - Court Assistant/ Intern

- **How did you find your internship?**
    - I found my internship through Kristen Stratton in Career Services.

- **What were your duties?**
    - The duties of my internship included observing courtroom proceedings in criminal court, assist in jury selection and jury trials, check defendants and attorneys in when they entered the courtroom, and obtain files from the Clerk of Courts when needed

- **How many hours per week were you at your internship site?**
    - The site was very flexible with hours for my internship, I spent at minimum 10.5 hours a week there. Some weeks like trial weeks I stayed longer when I could, and other weeks when the Judge had nothing on the schedule or planned I would leave early.

- **What did you enjoy most about your internship?**
    - What I enjoyed most about the internship is seeing the "behind the scenes" of court proceedings. Every day, there was a new case, and it was interesting seeing all the different people in a Courtroom work together. I enjoyed seeing that the defense and prosecution are not actually adversaries but rather work together often to get the best plea bargain. I especially enjoyed being able to speak with each person in the courtroom whether that be the Judge, Prosecutor, Public Defender, or Court Sheriffs. It was an amazing networking opportunity.

- **What was the most difficult aspect of the internship?**
    - The most difficult aspect was learning the names of the individuals in the Courtroom and their respective roles and knowing proper Courtroom etiquette. It took me at least one month to place people into their offices whether they were from the District Attorney's office, Public Defender's office, Court Administration, or Clerk of Courts. After that, it took me still another month to learn their names and be able to place the correct names with the correct faces. I saw multiple different people each day and there was never one consistent person from each office, but it really showed me how multiple people must come together to make the Justice System work.

- **How did your experience at UPG and in the Public Policy department prepare you for your internship?**
    - My experiences at UPG and my major and minor prepared me with the textbook knowledge of what I would witness in the courtroom. I found it extremely fascinating to witness firsthand an expert witness' testimony after I learned a lot about that procedure in my legal psychology class. Furthermore, the different social factors from public policy classes helped me to analyze the courtroom and different interactions of people with multiple different perspectives.   (NEXT)

- **How has your internship prepared you for a career?**
  - This internship greatly prepared me for my career field. It has ignited an interest in the possibility of becoming a Judge in my later years, and it also opened my eyes to the possibility of being a law clerk as well. It taught me multiple things about the courtroom and court procedures. In fact, I even had attorneys tell me that many of them never received in court experience until they had graduated law school. It has also provided me with a valuable network of people to associate with in my career field.

- **What recommendations do you have for other students about doing an internship?**
  - I absolutely recommend an internship! This has been the best experience of my life, and I have no regrets about it. It is the highlight of my week, and I have enjoyed every moment of it thus far. I recommend finding an internship that you think you will genuinely enjoy, and trying to network with as many people as possible while you are there.

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