

## **SECTION II**

### ***Resume & Cover Letter Writing***

## HOW TO WRITE EFFECTIVE RESUMES AND COVER LETTERS

*This section consists of suggestions about and examples of legal resumes and cover letters. Before scheduling an appointment for a resume critique, please use this information to revise your current resume.*

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## The Legal Resume: Format and Examples

There are a number of things to keep in mind when preparing your legal resume. First, a legal resume varies in format and content from other types of resumes; therefore, it is probably necessary to revise your current resume. Potential employers will formulate their first impressions of you while reviewing your resume. Consequently, you want to make sure your resume is a true reflection of your skills, interests, abilities, accomplishments, and even your personality. When employers review resumes, they will usually scan them first, looking quickly for achievements, experience and other highlights. Instead of writing in sentences and paragraphs, use phrases; be concise. Through the judicious use of spacing, highlighting, and underlining you can exercise a great deal of control over the initial thirty-second scan your resume receives by emphasizing those items enhancing your candidacy.

Included in the following pages are: a general resume format; a list of law-related action verbs to draw from when writing job descriptions for the "Experience" section of your resume; "Questions and Answers on Resume Writing"; a number of sample resumes; "Questions and Answers on Cover Letter Writing"; and cover letter samples.

Variations on the standard resume form are encouraged. You may decide to highlight certain information and underplay other details depending on your targeted employer. Notice that, while each sample resume generally conforms to the legal resume format, each is unique.

The ways in which one may produce a resume are numerous. The campuses have computer equipment for student use; therefore, students seeking employment can create a professional, laser printed resume. An attractive substantial grade of stationary should be used and it is recommended you use a conservative color (white or off-white); avoid stationary with imprinted fibertone (i.e., flecked or speckled). Your final documents should be perfectly word-processed with no errors. Additionally, legal employers are usually interested in obtaining as much information as quickly as possible. Therefore, a resume that calls attention to keywords by using underlining, uppercase letters or bold face type will appeal to employers.

Employers looking for legal talent expect clarity, neatness and evidence of strong communication skills. If your resume is poorly designed, copied, not printed, difficult to scan, hard to understand or contains a typographical error, you will give the employer reason to assume you may not live up to his/her expectations of you on the job.

Remember, your resume is the first "writing sample" an employer will see!



## Law-Related Action Verbs

accepted	convicted	guided	provided
accomplished	coordinated	handled	publicized
achieved	corrected	held	pursued
acquitted	corresponded	highlighted	questioned
adapted	counseled	identified	read
added	created	implemented	recommended
administered	critiqued	improved	reconciled
admitted	cross-examined	increased	recorded
advised	debated	informed	rectified
advocated	defended	initiated	redirected
afforded	defined	innovated	reduced
aided	delivered	inquired	referred
allocated	demonstrated	instituted	reported
amended	deposed	instructed	represented
analyzed	described	interpreted	researched
answered	designed	interrogated	resolved
appeared	determined	interviewed	responded
applied	deterred	introduced	revealed
appointed	developed	investigated	reviewed
approved	devised	launched	revised
arbitrated	devoted	litigated	ruled
argued	directed	maintained	scheduled
arranged	disseminated	managed	selected
articulated	distributed	maximized	served
assembled	documented	mediated	settled
assessed	drafted	mobilized	solved
assisted	edited	modified	specialized
attained	effected	monitored	specified
attended	elucidated	named	sponsored
authored	enforced	negotiated	strategized
balanced	engaged	observed	strengthened
billed	engineered	obtained	studied
briefed	entered	operated	submitted
budgeted	established	orchestrated	subpoenaed
catalogued	evaluated	organized	suggested
chaired	executed	oriented	summarized
challenged	exercised	originated	supervised
changed	expanded	oversaw	supported
classified	explained	participated	surveyed
collected	explored	persuaded	targeted
combined	exposed	pinpointed	taught
communicated	facilitated	planned	tracked
compared	familiarized	predicted	trained
competed	filed	prepared	traveled
compiled	financed	presented	tried
concluded	focused	prevailed	updated
conducted	formulated	produced	verified
constructed	fulfilled	processed	won
consulted	gathered	proofed	worked
contracted	generated	prosecuted	wrote
convinced	governed	protected	used

## Questions and Answers on Resume Writing

Below are frequently asked questions to the Career Development staff. The answers should help you in preparing a rough draft of your resume before your appointment. We may then spend our time clarifying wording and format, as well as dealing with concerns unique to your situation.

Keep in mind that the answers in this handout are only suggestions. There are a variety of approaches you may wish to take in creating your resume.

### GENERAL

Q: What is the purpose of a resume?

A: A resume serves to introduce you to potential employers in the most favorable light possible, ultimately culminating in interviews. Further, what you include in your resume will influence the interviewer's questions and the tone of the interview in general. You actually exert a significant amount of control over the interview by what you present in your resume.

Q: How do I begin to write a resume?

A: The first thing you do when drafting a resume is to take an inventory of everything you have done. To begin this process you are going to make six (6) different lists with the following headings: education, work experience, activities, academics, interests and miscellaneous.

Under **education**, list all post-secondary education including law school, colleges and universities attended, exchange programs, off-campus study, etc. List degrees, month and year obtained or expected to obtain, names and locations of schools, major and minor, and grade point average.

Under **work experience**, list all jobs held full time, part time, paid or unpaid including externships. List the months and years you worked, position, name and location of employer, and your duties and responsibilities. You may also choose to create a separate legal experience section in order to distinguish your legal positions from your non-legal positions.

Under **activities**, list all extra- and co-curricular activities, i.e., organized groups, teams, clubs, community involvements in which you participated in both undergraduate school and in law school.

Under **academics**, list scholarships received, class rank, special recognition and academic achievements.

Under **interests**, list hobbies, travel experiences and special talents.

Under **miscellaneous**, list everything you left out thus far. This list may contain computer languages and software, foreign languages, etc.

**DO NOT LIMIT YOURSELF AT THIS POINT; LIST EVERYTHING, EVEN IF IT SEEMS TRIVIAL.**

- Q. Now that I have all this information, what do I do with it?
- A. Once you have made your lists, the editing process begins. Ask yourself the following questions for each item listed: Do I feel a sense of pride or accomplishment? Does it relate to what a prospective employer might be looking for? What aspects of my education, experience or skills will be most attractive to an employer? For example, working at Hershey Park as a ride attendant for three years may seem trivial to you, but being a conscientious worker and having the ability to deal with the public during this job may be pertinent information. Which things on my list show different aspects of my personality?
- Q. What do I do once I have identified the most pertinent information?
- A. Organize your information. Review the sample resumes in this packet. Prepare a draft copy of your resume and make an appointment with the Career Development Office to have it reviewed. Once the CDO has offered suggestions, prepare a final product.

### **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Q: Should I include my memberships in student organizations and participation in activities? How should I include them?

- A: In general, well-rounded individuals impress legal employers, so it is recommended that you list your activities on your resume. The next question is, “What are the most important items to put on the resume?” Ask yourself which facts are most important to you, as well as what you are trying to accomplish. If you are trying to emphasize your writing ability or experience, you may include writing for the Widener Law Review or your participation in a writing competition. For future litigators, it may be important to stress excellence in advocacy skills and training. Consider adding participation in trial

competitions or memberships in Moot Court and/or Moe Levine. If you are editor-in-chief of the Widener Law Review, you may want a separate heading for that item.

## **PRE-LEGAL EDUCATION/EMPLOYMENT**

**Q:** How much information about pre-legal education should I include? Should I mention high school?

**A:** As with all sections of your resume, emphasize your highest levels of achievement. For example, mention serious academic honors and achievements, as well as positions of leadership in organizations. The inclusion of social/recreational activities will help present you as well rounded. Regarding high school: this information is rarely included unless a specific reason exists for doing so, e.g., you attended a small select prep school or a school that you believe will be of special significance to the employer.

**Q:** What if I have little or no legal background or experience?

**A:** Probably at least one of your jobs, if not all, facilitated the development of skills and abilities which are used by a lawyer. For example, if you have sales experience or have otherwise dealt directly with people, you have probably developed excellent oral communication skills. Additionally, your participation in undergraduate activities and organizations may provide employers insight into your organizational and leadership skills. Other transferable skills include research and writing, analytical skills, problem solving, supervisory skills, ability to handle large workloads, negotiation skills, and ability to work independently.

Your career goals will influence the manner in which you present your experience. If you have experience in a field in which you wish to continue, it makes sense to include that experience. If your goal is to work for a law firm, emphasize your legal or law-related experience, such as law clerk. Remember to use law-related action words such as "drafted," "interviewed," "argued," etc., to assist you in describing your skills in a legally relevant manner. NOTE: It is recommended that you do not include personal pronouns on your resume.

**Q:** What if I have substantial professional experience that is not law-related?

**A:** You will want to find a balance whereby you emphasize the fact that you are a person with extensive professional experience, but without over-emphasizing your particular

field. You want to demonstrate that your orientation is now toward a law career, and that skills developed through previous work experience are transferable. An appointment with a Career Counselor will help you determine whether this is an appropriate option.

Q: What if I have held a variety of jobs that were not on the same professional level to which I now aspire?

A: You may include a short paragraph summarizing such experiences, e.g., "Held various hospitality industry positions providing the opportunity to build communication/public relations skills." If you worked in order to help finance your education, you may include this information, e.g., "Worked summers throughout college as (include title, separated by commas) contributing substantially to college tuition." See Resume Sample p. 14.

Q: What if I have little or no work background?

A: In this case, emphasize positions of responsibility, activities, honors and grades in college and law school, as well as community interests and volunteer activities.

## **PERSONAL/INTERESTS**

Q: Should I include personal data such as birth date, marital status, and health?

A: The appropriate emphasis in a resume is on professional qualifications. Personal data is not included.

Q: What if I took several years off to raise my children? How should this be reflected on my resume?

A: If your gap in time is more than 6 months, it should be addressed in your resume. Create an "Other Experience" section towards the end of your resume. Briefly state that you were involved with significant volunteer and/or leadership positions (i.e. PTA Treasurer, School Fund Raiser- raised amount in # of years). These are significant achievements and denote skills that are transferable to the legal industry.

Q: Should I list interests on a resume?

A: This is an optional section on a resume, which is seen with increasing frequency. The advantage is that by including interests, you make it known you are a well-rounded person, and you create a safe topic of conversation which can serve as an icebreaker for the interviewer.

Q: How should I handle affiliations, which may point out a political, religious, or other orientation different from a potential employer?

A: In order to strike a balance between being practical and being true to yourself, you must decide how important to your identity that affiliation is, and whether or not you can work comfortably with an employer with a different viewpoint. For example, if the affiliation is crucial to your identity, but you could work with an employer with a divergent viewpoint, you may want to de-emphasize the affiliation or leave it out. If you could not work with such an employer, it may be more important that your resume make your affiliation clear to potential employers.

## **REFERENCES**

Q: What about references?

A: Ideally, references should be respected individuals in the legal field who are able to speak to your legal abilities. Include references as a separate document to your resume, listing each reference's name, title, work address, and work phone. If the relationship is not apparent, you might also consider including a brief line describing that person's relationship to you, e.g.: supervising attorney at Smith, Jones, and Wilson. You should confirm this information with your references; advise them as to when you will begin your job search, and follow-up with a courtesy copy of your resume for each reference.

## **BAR EXAMINATIONS/ADMISSIONS**

Q: How should I reflect that I sat for a Bar Exam on my resume?

A: One example would be to include a separate section as your first entry on your resume entitled: BAR EXAMINATION(S) and then list "Commonwealth of Pennsylvania" July 2011, results pending.

Q: As a graduate, how should I word my bar admission(s)?

A: There are several ways to present your bar admission(s). One alternative is to include separate header entitled "BAR ADMISSIONS" and then list "Supreme Court of Pennsylvania November 2011; Supreme Court of New Jersey, December, 2011; U.S. District Court E.D. Pa., November, 2011. See Resume Sample, p. 23. Another alternative is to center your bar admission across the page and state "Admitted to Supreme Court of Pennsylvania November, 2011:" or "Admitted to Practice

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania November, 2011." In any event, your bar admission(s) should appear at the top of your resume.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

**Q:** May I get further assistance with my resume?

**A:** Yes. After reading the information in this packet you may still want suggestions about specific concerns. Please make an appointment with the Career Development Office counselors to review your resume draft and discuss your career options.

The following is a checklist to aid in resume preparation.

- Hold your resume at arm's length to see how it looks
- Evaluate the content of your resume
- Make important information easy to find
- Use action verbs to describe work responsibilities
- Use the correct tense (past/present) of action verbs
- Review resume for correct capitalization, punctuation and dates
- Review resume for consistency in date format usage
- Make your name stand out by utilizing bold text, underlining or capital letters
- List your current address, email address and telephone number
- Match your resume content to the employer and the position sought
- Include only accurate information
- Review for typographical, grammatical and spelling errors
- Eliminate excessive type/font styles, sizes, lines or boxes creating a "busy" look
- Avoid excessive blank space on your resume
- Avoid excessive repetition of words or phrases including articles like "a," "an" and "the"

## Sample Resumes

## First-Year Student

**JOHN J. JUSTICE**  
1515 Somewhere Street  
Anywhere, Pennsylvania 17110  
(717) 999-9999  
jjustice@internet.net

### EDUCATION

**Widener University Commonwealth Law School**  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

J.D. expected May 2015

Competitions: Alternative Dispute Resolution, *finalist*  
Memberships: Pennsylvania Bar Association, Student Division

**Dickinson College**  
Carlisle, Pennsylvania

B.A. awarded May 2012

Major: Political Science  
GPA: 3.18  
Honor: Dean's List (all semesters); Dickinson Scholar  
Athletics: NCAA Division III (Centennial Conference), *Captain* – Track & Field  
Volunteer: Habitat for Humanity – Chester, PA (semester breaks)

### RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

**Widener University School of Law**  
Wilmington, Delaware

Fall 2012

**Law Library Assistant.** Worked in government documents section; maintained tax and labor loose-leaf services; filed state and federal slip laws; assisted patrons in locating the proper reference materials and government documents.

**Dickinson College**  
Carlisle, Pennsylvania

Fall 2010 & Spring 2011

**Resident Assistant.** Assisted students in campus residence hall with academic and social issues; maintained safety and order in the residence halls.

### OTHER EXPERIENCE

\*Held various other positions throughout college, including bartender, lifeguard and waiter to finance undergraduate education.

### INTERESTS

Softball, golf, theater

## Second-Year Student – Extended Division

### MARILYN R. SPENCER

[mrspencer@anywhere.com](mailto:mrspencer@anywhere.com)

20 Spring Drive  
Harrisburg, PA 17111  
(717) 541-0000

#### EDUCATION

**Widener University Commonwealth Law School**  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

J.D. expected May 2015  
Extended  
Division

GPA: 3.013 (Top 20 percent = 3.013)  
Honor: Certificate of Achievement: Torts  
Leadership: Treasurer, Environmental Law and Policy Society  
Competition: Pace University Environmental Law Writing Competition - semi-finalist

**Lehigh University**  
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

B.S. awarded May 2007  
*cum laude*

Major: Economics  
Minor: Business Administration  
Honor : Central Dauphin Education Association Scholarship  
Activity: Chi Omega Sorority, Intramural Sports Coordinator  
Study Abroad: University of Cologne (2 semesters), Cologne, West Germany

#### LEGAL EXPERIENCE

**Jones & Powell**  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

May 2012 - Present

**Law Clerk.** Conduct legal research primarily in the area of insurance defense claims arising out of medical malpractice suits; draft briefs, memoranda and pleadings; summarize depositions; assist attorney in trial preparation; and observe appellate arguments.

**The Honorable Donald E. Wieand**  
Superior Court of Pennsylvania  
Allentown, Pennsylvania

Summer 2011

**Judicial Clerk.** Analyzed cases, which were submitted to and/or argued before the Superior Court; researched case and statutory law; drafted opinions and bench memoranda and assisted with court week duties.

#### EMPLOYMENT

**Lambert Industries**  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

June 2003 - May 2010

**Account Executive.** Assessed customer requirements; generated corporate accounts in excess of \$2 million; procured government business; negotiated pricing structure for purchasing contracts; and reviewed and evaluated new product implementation procedures.

#### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Lehigh University Alumni Club - Board of Directors, Big Brother/Big Sister Program - 3 year volunteer

## Second-Year Student – Regular Division

### JANE D. DEMURRER

2030 Anywhere Road  
Somewhere, Pennsylvania 19380  
Home (215) 666-6666/jddemur2030@hotmail.com

#### EDUCATION

**Widener University Commonwealth Law School**  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

J.D. expected May 2014

Rank: 10 out of 209  
Law Review: *The Pennsylvania Journal of Corporate Law*, Staff  
Honors: Widener Scholar; Dean's Honors List – (two semesters);  
Phi Delta Phi, Harrington Inns of Court  
Memberships: American Bankruptcy Institute, Student Membership  
Research: Directed Research Topic, Law and Economics Analysis of  
Pennsylvania Corporate Law.

**Saint Joseph's University**  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

B.A. awarded May 2011

Major: History  
GPA: 3.46  
Honors: Phi Alpha Theta, National History Honor Society  
Pi Gamma Nu, Social Science Honor Society  
Dean's List (all semesters)

#### LEGAL EXPERIENCE

**United States Bankruptcy Court**  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
Reading, Pennsylvania

Summer 2012

**Law Clerk.** Researched legal issues related to the United States Bankruptcy Code; drafted judicial opinions; and observed Chapter 11 and Chapter 7 hearings and pre-hearing judicial conferences.

#### OTHER EXPERIENCE

**Macys, Inc.**  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Summers 2009, 2010 & 2011

**Assistant Manager.** Supervised and trained staff of 14 employees. Handled all opening and closing procedures, sales meetings and incentive program, bank deposits, receipts and computer level inventory control.

\*Held various positions throughout college to help finance undergraduate education.

## Second-Year Student – Regular Division

**John M. Alexander**  
119 Crawford Lane  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17999  
(717) 444-4444  
jmalex@amethyst.net

### EDUCATION

Widener University Commonwealth Law School  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

J.D. expected May 2014

Honors: Certificate of Achievement - Property I  
High Grades: Torts I (A); Property I (A+); Legal Methods (A-)  
Member: Pennsylvania Bar Association, Student Division  
Association of Family and Conciliation Courts

The Pennsylvania State University  
University Park, Pennsylvania

B.S. awarded May 2009

Major: Internal Family Studies  
Minor: Business/Liberal Arts  
GPA: 3.1/4.0  
Honor: University Scholarship - Freshman Year

### LEGAL EXPERIENCE

York County Legal Services  
Reeceville, Pennsylvania

August 2009 to Present

*Legal Assistant:* Assist attorneys representing indigent clients in matters of general practice including divorce, child custody, personal injury and landlord/tenant law.

### WORK EXPERIENCE

Dick's Sporting Goods  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

May 2006 to July 2009

*Sales:* Assisted customers in selection of merchandise; operated cash register; opened and closed department.

### VOLUNTEER WORK

York County Division Three Little League Coach  
Division of Youth and Family Services--Big Brother Program

## Third-Year Student – Regular Division

**U. Charles Cullen, III**  
1300 North South Road  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17999  
(717) 111-1111  
[uccull@webmaster.biz](mailto:uccull@webmaster.biz)

### EDUCATION

**Widener University Commonwealth Law School** J.D. expected May 2013  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

G.P.A.: 3.243; (Top 20% of class)  
Honors: Moot Court Honor Society  
Advocacy Training: Intensive Trial Advocacy Program  
Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition  
Leadership: Class Representative, Student Bar Association  
Memberships: Widener Republican Caucus, Sergeant at Arms  
Pennsylvania Bar Association, Student Division

**Gettysburg College** B.A. awarded June 2010  
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

GPA: 3.25  
Major: Finance  
Honors: Dean's List (8 semesters)

### LEGAL EXPERIENCE

**Judicial Clerk Intern** Summer 2012  
Dauphin County Court of Common Pleas

Assisted Judge's law clerk in reviewing briefs, petitions and orders; researched criminal law and procedural issues; assisted in trial preparation and trial conferences; and drafted opinions.

### OTHER EXPERIENCE

**Dormitory Resident Assistant** September 2008 - May 2010  
Gettysburg College

Served as a counselor for 75 coed students in a university residential hall. Coordinated dormitory activities; acted as student liaison in dealing with university administration; and performed various counseling functions.

**Department Manager** Summer 2008  
The Department Store  
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

Ordered all merchandise for several departments; maintained the stockroom inventory for these departments; and assisted customers in locating and choosing merchandise.

## Two-Page Resume

### CHRISTOPHER P. ALLEN

2500 East West Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19999  
home (215) 555-5555  
work (215) 666-6666  
[c\\_allen456@erols.com](mailto:c_allen456@erols.com)

## EDUCATION

### Widener University Commonwealth Law School

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Honors: Certificate of Achievement, Civil Procedure

Membership: Philadelphia Bar Association, Student Division

J.D./M.B.A expected May 2013

### School of Business Administration

Chester, Pennsylvania

Honors: Dean's List (2 semesters)

### Temple University

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Major: Accounting

G.P.A.: 3.8/4.0

Honors: Dean's List (all semesters)

B.B.A. awarded May 2000

*summa cum laude*

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### Philadelphia Platforms, Inc.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

March 2007 - Present

**Controller.** Supervise financial management of corporation. Plan and implement budgets and cash flow analysis. Prepare payroll and all corporate tax returns. Oversee computer and manual operations including internal auditing.

November 2006 - February 2007

**Senior Staff Accountant.** Prepared tax returns for individuals, corporations and partnerships; provided compilation and review services; represented clients at tax audits and arranged deferred payment agreements with various governmental agencies.

***Achievements-*** Promoted to Senior Staff Accountant after one year as Junior Staff Accountant

November 2005 – October 2006

**Junior Staff Accountant.** Worked with senior staff accountants to assist with preparation of tax returns; attended client tax audits with senior staff; assisted with other general administrative tasks.

***Awards*** – Won “*Work Achievement Award*” as Junior and Senior Staff Accountant positions.

**McTavish and Company**  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

July 2004 - November 2005

**Junior Accountant.** Maintained cost accounting and inventory records and assisted in preparation of monthly financial reports to management.

**Safety Insurance Co.**  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

May 2002 - June 2004

**Claims Service Representative.** Received and reviewed property and casualty claim reports; recorded statements from involved parties and witnesses and participated in other investigative and claim settlement procedures.

*Achievements* – revised claims procedure manual and successfully negotiated 50 claims resulting in 20% cost savings for company.

**Office Assistant.** Handled high volume of client intakes; scheduling and general administrative tasks.

**Wilson Temporary Staffing Inc.**  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

May 2000 – April 2002

**Temporary Secretary .** Worked in various business settings on a temporary basis, assisting management with accounting, budgets and secretarial duties, such as web maintenance, filing, and client communications.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Habitat for Humanity (2005 – present)  
Red Cross Blood Drive Representative (2004 – 2009)

## **PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION**

Certified Public Accountant

## **INTERESTS**

Classical music, piano, world history, certified NASCAR Mechanic



## Third/Fourth Year Student

### Lawrence L. Marks

121 Progress Street  
Harrisburg, PA 19999  
(717) 555-5555  
e-mail: llmarks3301@mail.widener.edu

#### EDUCATION

Widener University Commonwealth Law School  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

J.D. expected May 2013

GPA: 3.069  
Class Rank: Top 25%  
Honors: Law Review, **Widener Law Journal**  
Publication: Marks, Lawrence L., *The Fourth Amendment in the New Millennium*. 8 Widener L. J. 212 (2011)  
Activities: Widener New Horizons Club, Vice President  
Pennsylvania Bar Association, Student Division

St. Joseph's University  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

B.A. awarded May 2010

Major: English  
GPA: 3.5  
Honors: Dean's List (7 of 8 semesters)  
Activity: Varsity Soccer Team

#### LEGAL EXPERIENCE

Pennsylvania Civil Clinic  
Widener University School of Law

August 2010 - present

**Certified Legal Intern.** Conduct legal research; draft pleadings, memoranda and briefs; interview clients; negotiate agreements; and represent clients at mediation as well as court hearings pursuant to Pennsylvania Supreme Court Rules 321 and 322.

Smith, Jones & Brown  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Summer 2010

**Law Clerk.** Conducted legal research, prepared motions, and drafted memoranda on a variety of topics relating to corporate law and assisted in trial preparation.

#### INTERESTS

Golf, Music, U.S. History

**REFERENCE PAGE - SEPARATE DOCUMENT FROM RESUME**

**Lawrence L. Marks**

121 Progress Street  
Harrisburg, PA 19999  
(717) 555-5555  
e-mail: llmarks@law.widener.edu

**REFERENCES**

Professor Thomas Torts  
Widener University Commonwealth Law School  
3737 Vartan Way  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17106  
(717) 541-3900  
(Torts Professor)

John D. Smith, Esquire  
Smith, Jones & Brown  
277 Somewhere Street  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 19999  
(717) 999-9999  
(Supervising Attorney at Smith, Jones & Brown)

Professor Frances Finance  
Widener University Commonwealth Law School  
3737 Vartan Way  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17106  
(717) 541-3900  
(Business Organizations Professor)

## Third/Fourth Year Evening Division

### Patricia Patent

123 Main Street  
Anywhere, Pennsylvania 17112  
(717) 555-1234  
patsypat@gravitas.net

## EDUCATION

Widener University Commonwealth Law School  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

J.D. expected May 2013  
Extended Division

Rank: Top 30%  
Honors: Certificate of Achievement, Legal Methods II  
Certificate of Achievement, Patent Law  
High Grades: Legal Methods II (A-)  
Patent Law (A+)  
Copyright Law (A)

University of Pennsylvania  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

B.S. awarded May 2004  
*summa cum laude*

Major: Chemical Engineering  
G.P.A.: 3.82/4.0  
Honors: Dean's List (all semesters)  
Activities: President, Engineering Society  
Dormitory Resident Advisor  
Chair, Special Olympics Committee (Fall 1998)

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Washington, D.C.

June 2004 - Present

**Patent Examiner.** Determine the patentability of inventions submitted by engineers, inventors and scientists to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Analyze the subject matter of the application for a patent, as well as the prior art to the field. Grant or reject the claims of the application. Possess area of specialization in chemical engineering. Gained knowledge of the patent laws, rules of practice, using the Manual of Patent Examining Practice and Procedure.

## PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE

United States Patent and Trademark Office

March 2005

## INTERESTS

Renaissance Art, Antiques, Gardening, Hot Air Ballooning

## Recent Graduate

SARA M. ABRAHAMSON  
429 Alcott Drive  
Somewhere, Pennsylvania 19808  
(717) 478-2222 (H)  
sara\_m\_a\_law374@yahoo.com

### BAR ADMISSIONS

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
State of New Jersey

November 2010  
December 2010

### LEGAL EXPERIENCE

Schaffer and Lewis  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

September 2010 to Present

*Associate Attorney.* Civil defense firm with emphasis in patent litigation; correspond with clients and provide opinions as to patentability of client's products; assigned an excess of twenty-five files.

September 2008 to 2010

*Law Clerk.* Researched legal issues; prepared briefs, motions, pleadings and discovery responses.

Law Offices of Alan C. Marks  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

May 2007 to September 2008

*Law Clerk.* Firm specializing in personal injury litigation; researched legal issues; prepared briefs, motions, pleadings and discovery; corresponded with clients and interviewed trial witnesses; and prepared files for arbitration and trial.

### EDUCATION

Widener University Commonwealth Law School  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

J.D. awarded May 2010

High Grades: Contracts II; Criminal Procedure; Legal Methods/Analysis, Research & Writing

Activities: Student Bar Association, Class Representative  
Phi Alpha Delta Legal Fraternity  
Women's Law Caucus

Research: Completed research in the area of Toxic Tort Litigation under the direction of Professor Theresa X. Torts.

Villanova University  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

B.S. awarded May 2007

Major: Industrial Engineering  
Minor: English Literature

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON COVER LETTER WRITING

- Q. What information should I include in a cover letter?
- A. A cover letter should highlight your skills and qualifications as they relate to your targeted employer. This differs from the resume, which highlights your achievements and accomplishments. Your cover letter should not repeat verbatim the information contained in your resume, but instead, demonstrate how your skills can meet the employer's needs. The employer perceives the cover letter as a writing sample and/or work product; therefore, it should be treated as such by you. **NOTE:** A common pitfall in writing a cover letter is the over-use of personal pronouns to begin sentences and paragraphs. Always review your cover letter to determine if editing is necessary.
- Q. What is the appropriate length of a cover letter?
- A. The cover letter should be written in a strong, concise, but brief manner. It is strongly recommended that a cover letter be no more than one page in length.
- Q. May I use the same cover letter for each employer?
- A. In today's competitive job market, every effort should be made to strengthen your candidacy. Individuality and creativity will pique the interest of the reader while the mass mailing of form cover letters is ineffective and wasteful and easily recognized by the employer. It conveys a lack of research and, therefore, knowledge about the employer, as well as a lack of commitment to wanting to work for that employer. Conducting research on employers before preparing your cover letter enables you to personalize or target cover letters to individual employers.
- Q. How should I address my cover letter?
- A. It is best to address your cover letter to the firm's designated contact person. If this information is not available, it is suggested you phone the firm to acquire the name of the contact person. If you cannot determine who the individual contact person is, use the title of the firm's contact person, e.g., "Recruitment Coordinator," "Hiring Partner," etc. **AVOID** the use of "Dear Sir" or "Dear Madam" or "To Whom It May Concern" as salutations.
- Q. What does an employer look for when reading a cover letter?
- A. You should answer the reader's questions, "Why is this candidate interested in my firm/organization?" "What can this candidate do for me (my organization)?" Tell the employer specifically why you want to work for them and also convey to the employer your relevant experience and abilities as well as concrete evidence that you possess those skills necessary to perform the job. Remember that your cover letter is, in a very real sense, a

schematic of yourself. It reflects your personality, your attention to detail, your communication skills, your enthusiasm, and your intellect. Your cover letter and resume are usually all an employer has to decide

whether or not you will reach the next phase in the application process -- the interview. These documents are the first Writing Samples an employer reads, as such, they should be concisely written and free of any typographical or grammatical errors.

Q. How should I address a request for salary requirements in a job ad?

A. Often it is difficult to determine what a specific position will pay. Although you may be interested, there is a concern that your salary requirements may be too high or too low for consideration for the position. The best way to handle this request is to state a salary range that is typical for the position, e.g., I am currently interviewing for positions in the low to mid sixties. The Career Development Office has salary surveys available to help you determine what the market will bear for the position you seek in your geographic region.

**CAUTION:** All documents should be spell checked/proofread for errors before sending/mailing to employers.

## SAMPLE COVER LETTERS

Below is a **standard cover letter format** for reference when creating cover letters.

Your Name  
Mailing Address  
City, State and Zip Code  
Telephone Number  
E-mail Address

Contact's Name, Job Title  
Firm/Organization Name  
Mailing Address

Today's Date

Dear Mr. (or Ms.) Last Name:

The first paragraph should answer the questions: Why do you want to work for this employer and what intrigued you about the potential position? Start the letter with an attention getter: a statement that establishes a connection with your reader, research conducted, or person who referred you. State something unique about the firm or organization and why it is of specific interest to you. Briefly state what job you are applying for and briefly who you are (1L, 2L, 3L, licensed DE attorney, etc...).

The second and/or third paragraphs should consist of relevant points about the firm's/organization's needs and your qualifications and how you can add value. Reference your enclosed resume here (i.e. As my enclosed resume provides, ...). This is where you need to sell yourself! Relate your skills and qualifications, whether direct or transferable, to the needs of the employer by stating relevant experience, achievements and how it benefits the employer. You should support all statements of your abilities with specific examples of your achievements or job tasks that relate to your abilities. (i.e. "I have excellent organizational skills and in my current position created a new database for client files"...) **Do not summarize your resume.** Keep in mind that the focus of this paragraph should be what you can do for them, not what they can do for you! (*You may find it helpful to break this information into two paragraphs, one concentrating on your knowledge, skills and abilities, and a second paragraph relating these qualifications to the employers needs.*)

The closing paragraph should pave your way to an interview. Restate your interest in the position and your desire for an interview. Thank the reader for his/her time and consideration. Restate your phone # and email address for their convenience.

Very truly yours,

Your handwritten signature

Your Name (typed)

Enclosure(s)

**FIRST YEAR SAMPLE**

**Joshua S. Silverstone**

53 Colony Boulevard  
Building 3, Apartment 1067  
Harrisburg, PA 19927  
(717) 555-9842  
josh\_silrock@hotmail.usa

Joanne Angelou, Esquire  
Hiring Partner  
Dewey, Snerd & Angelou, LLC  
6822 Delaware Avenue  
Harrisburg, PA 19722

(Insert date here)

Dear Ms. Angelou:

At your suggestion and Mr. Joseph Bush, I reviewed the information on your website concerning your summer program and was intrigued by the significant opportunities offered for legal research and writing. I have excelled in my legal writing classes and look forward to the prospect of making a positive contribution in your summer program.

As my attached resume indicates, my work background has allowed me to develop numerous job skills applicable to the legal world. As the co-chair of my mock trial team in college, I began my training in public speaking and oral advocacy. As a cashier and later manager for Office Depot in Harrisburg, I experienced a high-pressure work environment where I was required to balance competing priorities and keep customers happy while also implementing cost saving strategies. Currently, I am working part-time as a telemarketer for a local credit card company and have developed my communication and problem-solving skills, which I am confident will help me succeed as your summer intern.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss my qualifications. I can be reached at (717) 555-9842 or via email at [josh\\_silrock@hotmail.usa](mailto:josh_silrock@hotmail.usa). Thank you for your consideration of my resume.

Very truly yours,

Joshua S. Silverstone

Attachment

**SECOND YEAR SAMPLE**

**Kaneesha C. Washington**

451 South Cherry Avenue  
Holland Point, PA 19825  
(717) 555-7621  
kaneeshdub@centric.com

Lawrence H. Schwartz, Esquire  
Schwartz and Associates  
The Riddick Building, Suite 86015  
2400 John F. Kennedy Parkway  
Philadelphia, PA 19103

(Insert date here)

Dear Mr. Schwartz:

Your website mentions that your firm represents plaintiffs in products liability and medical malpractice matters. I am very interested in these areas of practice and would greatly appreciate the opportunity to positively contribute to the work at your firm. I am currently a second year law student at Widener University Commonwealth Law School and would like to be considered for your summer clerkship position as advertised through my Career Development Office.

As my attached resume demonstrates, my background includes a variety of experience that is relevant to your litigation practice. Last summer, I worked with the Bureau of Consumer Protection at the Pennsylvania Office of the Attorney General. That position allowed me to perform a variety of tasks including conducting legal research, writing memoranda of law, counseling consumers on products liability issues and negotiating settlements with business owners. In addition, my work as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) for the past six (6) years has taught me how to balance my priorities and provided me with valuable people skills which I developed further while working for the Attorney General. My EMT experience also exposed me to legal issues related to healthcare, including medical malpractice.

I am confident that my work with the Attorney General has prepared me to contribute to your products liability practice, while my EMT experience will serve you well in the analysis of medical malpractice matters. I look forward to meeting with you to discuss my qualifications. I can be reached at (717) 555-6721 or via email at [kaneeshdub@centric.com](mailto:kaneeshdub@centric.com). Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

Kaneesha C. Washington

Attachment

**THIRD YEAR SAMPLE-FIRM**

**Jane R. Green**  
114 Silverside Road  
Anywhere, PA 19802  
(717) 454-2252  
jrg@yahoo.com

Jonathan F. Gold, Esquire  
Senior Partner  
Silver, Gold & Platinum LLC  
416 Legal Way, Suite 411  
Georgetown, PA 19967

(Insert date here)

Dear Mr. Gold:

I met your colleague, Janice Emerald, at a Pennsylvania Bar Association function, and she recommended I contact you immediately regarding an open associate attorney position with your firm. After reviewing your website, I was excited to read about your successful Criminal Defense practice. I have a strong interest in criminal defense work and have discussed my relevant experience below. I am currently a third year student at Widener University Commonwealth Law School and am on schedule to graduate this May.

As my attached resume indicates, I have had two valuable internships as a Widener Commonwealth student. After my first year, I was selected to work as a summer intern with the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office. This experience allowed me to participate in each aspect of the criminal justice system and also provided me with practical experience drafting legal orders and memoranda. During my second summer, I interned with the United States Army's Judge Advocate General Corps. While there, I assisted in Courts-Martial and drafted briefs on behalf of the United States of America. My exposure to the prosecution of criminal cases for the State of Pennsylvania and The United States Army has provided me with a valuable and strategic perspective on criminal defense work, which will be of benefit to you in your practice.

I look forward to meeting with you to discuss my qualifications in further detail. I can be reached at (717) 454-2252 or via email at [jrg@yahoo.com](mailto:jrg@yahoo.com). Thank you for your consideration of my resume.

Very truly yours,

Jane R. Green

Attachment

**JUDICIAL CLERKSHIP SAMPLE (with prior clerkship experience)**

**John C. Law**

2117 North Widener Avenue  
Hopetown, PA 08797  
(717) 555-1212  
[jclaw@woofboom.net](mailto:jclaw@woofboom.net)

The Honorable Richard A. Bean  
Pennsylvania Court of Common Pleas  
400 Swede Street, P.O. Box 311  
Norristown, PA 19404-0311

(Insert date here)

Dear Judge Bean:

During this past school year, I had the honor of working as an extern with your colleague Judge LeRoy Mervin. Since he has retired from the bench, Judge Mervin suggested I contact you to express my interest in applying for a judicial clerkship with you during the 2013-2014 term. I am currently a fourth year evening division student at Widener University Commonwealth Law School. In addition, I am a native of Norristown and intend to practice law in my hometown.

My experience with Judge Mervin exposed me to the challenges and rewards offered while working as judicial clerk. I carried out a wide variety of tasks for the Judge, such as performing legal research, drafting opinions, assisting during voir dire and providing support at settlement conferences. These experiences would allow me to make an immediate positive contribution to your chambers should you grant me the opportunity to work with you. In addition, my academic achievements support my ability to positively contribute to your work. For example, I obtained a Certificate of Achievement in Legal Methods II signifying the highest grade in the class. I also performed well above the class average in my Pennsylvania Civil Practice class and the Intensive Trial Advocacy Program.

I look forward to utilizing both my academic and work experience and skills as outlined above and in my attached resume. I would be honored to meet with you to discuss the contributions I might make to your chambers and can be reached at your convenience at (717) 555-1212 or via email at [jclaw@woofboom.net](mailto:jclaw@woofboom.net).

Thank you for considering my application.

Respectfully,

John C. Law

Attachment

**JUDICIAL CLERKSHIP SAMPLE (NO PRIOR CLERKSHIP EXPERIENCE)**

**Jane C. Law**

2117 North Widener Avenue  
New Wilmington, PA 08797  
(610) 555-1212  
[jclaw@woofboom.net](mailto:jclaw@woofboom.net)

The Honorable Helen T. Thomas  
Pennsylvania Court of Common Pleas  
400 Swede Street, P.O. Box 311  
Norristown, PA 19404-0311

(Insert date here)

Dear Judge Thomas:

I am writing to you to express my interest in clerking for your chambers post graduation from law school. I am currently a fourth year evening division student at Widener University Commonwealth Law School. In addition, I am a native of Norristown and intend to practice law in my hometown.

As my attached resume details, I have served as an intern with two law firms in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. At both of these firms, I conducted legal research and drafted memoranda, briefs and motions. In addition, my academic achievements support my ability to positively contribute to your work. For example, I obtained a Certificate of Achievement in Legal Methods II signifying the highest grade in the class. I also performed above average in my Pennsylvania Civil Practice class and the Intensive Trial Advocacy Program. I am confident that my research and writing experience as well as my exposure to Pennsylvania procedural rules will allow me to make an immediate positive contribution to your chambers.

I look forward to applying both my legal experience and skills outlined above and in my attached resume. I would be honored to meet with you to discuss my qualifications in further detail. I can be reached at your convenience at (717) 555-1212 or via email at [jclaw@mail.widener.net](mailto:jclaw@mail.widener.net).

Thank you for considering my application.

Respectfully,

Jane C. Law

Attachment

**THIRD YEAR SAMPLE – ENVIRONMENTAL LAW**

**Joan E. Barnes**  
1101 North Oak Road  
Castle Park, NJ 08062  
(876) 555-9263  
[jebscuba@sailnet.net](mailto:jebscuba@sailnet.net)

Carol E. Gowling, Esquire  
Executive Director  
Friends of Coral Reefs  
4450 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 200  
Washington, D.C. 20034

(Insert date here)

Dear Ms. Gowling:

In examining your website, I was very impressed by the variety of activities that Friends of Reefs undertakes to educate lawmakers and the public regarding the dangers faced by the reef ecosystem. I would like to be considered for your summer intern position that you listed on PSLawnet. I am currently a third year Evening Division student at Widener University Commonwealth Law School.

As demonstrated in my enclosed resume, I have been successful in law school. I rank in the top third of my class and performed well in a variety of classes. I received an “A” in my Civil Procedure and Environmental Law classes and will be taking the Intensive Trial Advocacy Program (ITAP) at the end of this school year. Currently, I work as a volunteer at the Environmental and Natural Resources Law Clinic (Clinic) where I have performed legal research and drafted the federal preclusion section of the Clinic’s recent *amicus* brief to the United States Supreme Court filed in opposition to proposed state regulations permitting commercial development of Delaware wetlands. While attending law school, I work full-time as a litigation support paralegal with Krump & Stone, LLC, located in Wilmington, Delaware.

I am highly motivated to do everything I can to help stop the devastation of the world’s reef systems. For the last eighteen years, I have enjoyed scuba diving on various reefs in the Caribbean, including the fantastic Belize Barrier Reef. I have seen with my own eyes the deterioration of coral structures during that period. Global warming, pollution, careless anchoring practices and mindless harvesting of coral have all contributed to the crisis that reefs face worldwide. I am confident that my academic and work experiences would allow me to positively contribute to the Friends of Reefs mission to protect coral structures located outside the National Park system.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you in Washington, D.C. to further explore how I might assist you with your important work. Please contact me at your convenience at (876) 555-9263 or via email at [jebscuba@sailnet.net](mailto:jebscuba@sailnet.net).

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

Joan E. Barnes

Attachment

## OUT OF TOWN JOB SEARCH

Your Name  
Contact Info

Contact person  
Firm name  
Address

Date

Dear :

I am presently attending Widener University Commonwealth Law School and will receive a Juris Doctor degree in May, 20\_\_\_. I am interested in applying to (Name of firm) for an associate position following the completion of my studies in May. After reviewing your website, I was pleased to learn that your firm specializes in (areas of law). In addition, I am quite familiar with and fond of (City name) as I have several friends and relatives who live in the area. (state your connection to the area).

My academic achievements and my legal experience with (name of organization) have provided me with a strong substantive background in (relevant areas of law). Throughout law school, I held positions that often required as much as 20 hours of work each week. My work with clients, including drafting motions and legal memoranda enabled me to attain practical legal skills which would be of value to your firm. I look forward to putting that experience to work on behalf of your firm.

I have enclosed a resume and writing sample for your consideration. I would be pleased to speak with you about the needs of your firm during the coming year. I will be in (geographic area) (state dates) and would appreciate meeting with you during that period. I can be reached at (phone) or (email). Thank you very much for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

Very truly yours,

Name

## ACCEPTANCE/REJECTION SAMPLES

### Letters for Acceptance of Offer

Dear Mr. Reed:

I am very pleased to accept your offer of employment with Smith & Reed. I thoroughly enjoyed my recent visit to the firm to meet with several junior and senior associates in the Corporate Department, including Joan Smith and Tom Peters. I plan to contact them in the next few days to thank them for their assistance in making this important decision.

Thank you and I hope that we will have an opportunity to speak again before I begin next summer.

Sincerely,

### Offer received: acceptance/rejection put off:

Dear Ms. Connell:

I appreciate your interest in me for an associate position with your firm. I am still very interested in the possibility of working for (Name of firm). However, in view of the fact that I am considering other possibilities at this time, I am not prepared to make a final commitment. Understanding that you must make some decisions too, I will make a final decision by \_\_\_\_\_, and will communicate that decision to you. I appreciate your understanding and flexibility.

Again, thank you for your offer.

Sincerely,

### Detailed Letter Rejecting an Offer:

Dear Mr. Smith:

I am writing to advise you that, after much deliberation, I will not be accepting your offer to join Smith & Reed. As I am sure you can imagine my decision was based on a great deal of information obtained over the course of a lengthy recruitment process. Through the candor and forthrightness of you and your colleagues, I was provided with excellent information about Smith & Reed. The friendly and professional demeanor of everyone I met with, coupled with Smith & Reed's outstanding corporate practice, made this a very difficult decision. I would like to thank you again for all of your consideration and assistance in this endeavor, and hope that our paths cross again in the future.

Sincerely,

*\*It is also good practice to write a note even if you do not get offered the job. In addition to displaying good manners, it is possible that your resume could be kept on file for future openings or be passed on to the interviewer's colleagues who may also be seeking help. Never burn your bridges! Try turning the negative into a positive!*

**ALUMNI COVER LETTER**

**Matthew K. Mulligan, Esquire**

66 Walker Way  
Camden, New Jersey 08911  
856.219.2626  
mkm@yahoo.com

Joseph Marks, Esquire  
Franks, McGillicutty and Shaloub, LLP  
1500 Mellon Bank Center  
1735 Market Street  
Philadelphia PA 19103-7595

October 21, 2013

Dear Mr. Marks:

Franks, McGillicutty and Shaloub, LLP is an outstanding organization as evidenced by its excellent reputation in the legal community. After reviewing your website I was excited to learn about your corporate litigation, tax and real estate practices. I have experience in these practice areas and would like to be considered for an associate position with your firm. I am a licensed Pennsylvania and New Jersey attorney and a Certified Public Accountant. I also reside in the Philadelphia area.

As my enclosed resume provides, my professional experience in tax, corporate governance, and real estate finance has enabled me to gain the skills necessary to add immediate value to your corporate practice. During my current employment at Wesson & Barretta, I work on corporate litigation as well as commercial and residential real estate matters. While employed at Guberoff Consultants in Philadelphia, I directed international audit projects and managed a portion of the Sarbanes-Oxley implementation project. I have also worked in public accounting with a concentration in tax matters. I am confident that my legal and professional experience will be an asset to your practice.

I welcome the opportunity to personally interview with you at your convenience. Please feel free to contact me by email at [mkm@yahoo.com](mailto:mkm@yahoo.com) or telephone 856-219-2626 at any time. Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

Matthew K. Mulligan, Esquire

Enclosure