Judicial Clerkships

Judicial Clerkships: Questions and Answers

1. What is a judicial clerkship?

A judicial clerkship is a one to two year assignment where you are the clerk (essentially research assistant) for a particular judge. Some judges are now hiring law clerks on a permanent basis (sometimes called "career" clerks) instead of a one or two year term.

A judicial law clerk's work varies depending upon the judge with whom s/he is working. Typically, judicial law clerks review motions and briefs, research the law, and draft opinions.

At the appellate level, a law clerk's duties involve a great deal of research and writing. Appellate law clerks commonly draft memos explaining issues in cases before oral argument and assist judges in drafting opinions afterwards. Clerks also attend oral arguments in cases on which they have assisted their judges. Clerking at the United States Court of Appeals often involves some travel since cases are only heard in select cities.

In general, judicial law clerks working at the trial court level, especially in the federal courts, manage cases, draft opinions, and do extensive legal research to resolve written pre-trial motions (e.g., motions to dismiss, summary judgment). This position often involves considerable exposure to federal pre-trial and trial practice and to members of the local bar. At the state level, in addition to performing legal research, law clerks for trial judges sometimes act as deputy clerks or bailiffs, assisting in scheduling hearings and trials as well as managing jury panels.

Other types of clerking experiences that are often overlooked by students are Staff Attorneys and Pro Se Law Clerks. Various courts at both the federal and state levels hire attorneys who serve as law clerks for the entire court. Staff attorneys often review appeals and correspondence, assist in case management, and draft opinions. Pro se law clerks are common in the federal courts. Generally, they handle pro se matters such as prisoner habeas corpus petitions, civil rights complaints, employment discrimination complaints, and social security disability appeals.

2. Why should I clerk?

- **Prestige:** Clerking at a state or federal court is universally viewed as a valuable and prestigious position and excellent credential.
- **Perspective:** You will have the opportunity to view the system of justice from the other side of the bench. Unless you become a judge, you will never again have this opportunity.
- **Intellectually Stimulating:** Clerk positions are often more intellectually stimulating than associate positions at firms.
- **Experience:** This is an intensive period of post-graduate learning. By observing how the judicial decision-making process works, you will learn practical information about how to
draft briefs and present cases effectively. Legal employers know that as a judicial clerk, you will have honed your research and writing skills.

- **Enhance job prospects:** Most law clerks meet many prospective employers during their clerkship. Legal employers value a judicial clerkship greatly. Additionally, a judicial clerkship will overcome bad grades. Of course, with bad grades, it will be very difficult to get a judicial clerkship, but it can be done. A judicial clerkship will make mediocre grades seem invisible!

- **Reasonable hours:** You will typically be working more reasonable hours than your friends in private practice.

- **Reference and contact:** You will have an extremely useful recommendation and contact. When your letter says, “Judge so-and-so suggested I contact you,” you’ll grab their attention!

- **Mentorship:** Judges often become life-long mentors to their law clerks. This kind of relationship can be very valuable - both personally and professionally.

- **Self-Assessment:** A clerkship allows you to take additional time to decide what practice area(s) you are interested in pursuing. Judicial law clerks are exposed to a wide variety of legal practice areas and often rethink long-term goals during their clerkships.

- **Great Job:** In a survey of law clerks conducted by the National Association for Legal Career Professionals (NALP), 97% stated they would gladly clerk again. The bottom line is that clerking is a GREAT job and a wonderful way to spend a year or two (or more) after law school.

3. **I want to practice in Hawaii. Should I look for a clerkship in this state only?**

Geography is an important consideration. Generally, a clerkship in the state where you plan to practice is advantageous because of the contacts you make while clerking. You should not, however, limit your search based on this factor alone. Clerking is prestigious regardless of where you do it. Besides, a one or two year clerkship in another state (or territory) could be a lot of fun - there are judges who sit in the U.S. Virgin Islands after all!

4. **Do I have to be in the top 10% and on law review?**

No. Of course, it doesn’t hurt, and if you have these credentials, it is going to be an easier road for you. If you do not have stellar credentials, you need to go for another angle. You need to really let your personality shine through on your cover letter. Sometimes a judge will choose you just because you have something in common with him/her or you have something unusual in your background. For example, we have a First Circuit Court judge who looks for “great sense of humor and an ability to laugh at oneself” in potential clerks. This raises an important point - make sure you have all the "good stuff" on your resume. Be sure to include things like overseas travel, Outward-Bound experiences, volunteer commitments, raft guide experience, etc. In order to get over the law review problem, (i.e., you’re not on it), you need to submit a great writing sample. You need to stand out in the crowd if you are not on law review and do not have great grades. Things you can do are: work as an extern or unpaid intern for the judge during the school year; take a seminar course where you will do a lot of writing and really edit the sample until it is perfect; compete in writing competitions and moot court competitions; and take advantage of any opportunity to meet judges (e.g., joining American Inns of Court).
Keep in mind that grades and Law Review are less important at the state court level.

5. To what kind of court should I apply?

Any kind of clerkship is generally a great experience but you may want to give some thought to whether you would prefer working for a trial court or an appellate court. There are significant differences between the two. If you want to be a litigator, it would be ideal to obtain a clerkship with a trial court.

Next, consider the level of the court. If you are interested in an area of law that is practiced exclusively in the federal courts, you should actively pursue clerkships in the federal court system. Similarly, if you are planning to practice family law, for example, a federal clerkship might not be as useful as a clerkship with a state court judge.

If you are interested in clerking at the federal court level, there are many courts besides the Supreme Court, Circuit and District Courts, as follows:

**Federal Courts**

- US Supreme Court
  - US Courts of Appeals
    - US Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces
    - US Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit
  - US District Courts
    - Tax Court; Administrative Agencies
    - US Court of Federal Claims
    - US Court of Veteran Appeals
    - US Court of International Trade
  - US Magistrates
  - US Bankruptcy Courts

Most state judges at the appellate and highest trial court level offer clerkships.
There are other opportunities to keep in mind when applying for a clerkship.

- Judges in foreign courts often hire law clerks. International courts that may offer clerkships include the International Court of Justice in The Hague, the International War Crimes Tribunal, the Court of Justice of the European Communities, and The European Court of Human Rights.
- Don't forget the U.S. Court of International Trade and the Tribal Courts as well.
- There are clerkship positions available in entities outside of the judicial branch. Over thirty U.S. governmental departments and agencies utilize Administrative Law Judges (ALJs) and some of the judges hire law clerks.
- The Judicial Fellows Program is a one-year fellowship following a federal clerkship. Fellows work at the U.S. Supreme Court, the Federal Judicial Center, the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, or the U.S. Sentencing Commission on projects pertaining to the administration of law.

6. **How do I pick a judge?**

You must select the judges to whom you apply very carefully. It is not a good idea to apply to any judge whom you do not research in advance. You have to decide you would definitely work for a particular judge before you send him/her an application because judges do not look favorably on those who turn down a job offer.

There are a variety of resources for finding out additional information about judges. (See the attached list of resources.)

- Read some of the judges' opinions - recent cases, noteworthy opinions, or opinions in areas of law that you have a particular interest.
b. Read the judges' biographies. Almanac of the Federal Judiciary and The American Bench: Judges of the Nation are both great resources for information about judges that may not be widely known.
c. Talk to the judges' former law clerks. (Lists of WSRSL alumni who have clerked for judges the past few years are available on the Judicial Clerkship Information List).
d. Find recent news stories about the judges by searching on Lexis, Westlaw, or doing a Google search.
e. Articles written by a judge may give you far more insight into the judge’s thought process than his/her opinions. Search Lexis and Westlaw for articles.

Learning more about a judge before you apply will also give you an advantage over other applicants because you can be more specific in your cover letter, you can tailor your resume, and you might be able to select a writing sample that may have more appeal to a particular judge for some reason. Having detailed knowledge about a judge is also critical if you are selected for an interview.

The reputation of the judge or the court should not be given undue weight. All clerkships are prestigious. The reputation of the judge or the court is only significant if you are interested in pursuing an academic career, a Supreme Court clerkship, or joining a large law firm.

7. When is the deadline for applying?

There is no “one” deadline for every judge. You need to check the Judicial Clerkship Information List and/or each judge by calling his/her chambers to find out the deadline for application and the required application materials. This information has been collected for many, but not all, of the judges located in Hawaii and can be found on the Judicial Clerkship Information List.

If you are applying to any of the federal courts, you should be aware that a majority of federal judges use OSCAR, an online application system, to process and receive clerkship applications. Also, federal appellate judges begin the hiring process on the day after Labor Day during students' third year in law school. If you apply to a judge adhering to this policy, you should not submit any materials to the judge before Labor Day of your third year. Additionally, your law professors who may be writing letters of reference on your behalf may not send them until after Labor Day. Many of the federal district court judges have adopted this policy. It is critical for you to check on the deadlines with each judge. For more information about federal law clerk hiring policies, go to www.oscar.symplicity.com.

Do not forget to apply to newly appointed judges, who hire their law clerks even before they are sworn in. This can happen at any time of year. Also, be aware that emergencies happen, and sometimes law clerks have to leave a clerkship before their term ends, leaving an unadvertised vacancy. You could still obtain a clerkship this way, although it is unusual. Finally, it is possible to get a clerkship after you have been practicing; although this is rare.

8. What are the procedures for applying for a judicial law clerk position?

In general, your application should include a cover letter, resume, writing sample, and two to three letters of reference. Please note, however, that some judges have different requirements.
should refer to the Judicial Clerkship Information List or contact the judge’s chambers to find out exactly what the judge requires.

Plan to spend some time drafting and refining your cover letter and resume. The Career Services Office can assist you with this process.

A. Cover Letter

Your best starting point on writing a good cover letter is to review the chapter on cover letters in the Career Services Handbook. This chapter provides a good overview and some sample cover letters. Other cover letter samples geared specifically to judicial clerkship applications are included in the Resources section. Other tips to keep in mind:

1. Make certain the letter is well written and no longer than one page.
2. Do not write a terse, formal letter. Tell something about yourself. Judges often like to hire people who have something interesting in their background.
3. Highlight your strengths in the cover letter. First and foremost, emphasize your writing skills. This is particularly crucial if you are not on the Law Review or another journal. If you are applying to a court that does specialized work, emphasize your skills in that area. For example, when applying for a clerkship with the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, you would want to emphasize technical or engineering experience or a background in patent work.
4. To the extent you have a particular reason for applying to the judge, say it.
5. Letters sent to other geographic areas should state a reason, if you have one, for wanting to live in that region.
6. Also, indicate that you will be in the area on a certain date for an interview, should an interview be necessary. You should communicate that you will be willing to absorb the expenses associated with travel. Judges do not have funds to cover travel expenses.
7. Indicate in the cover letter what persons will be writing letters of reference on your behalf. Also indicate that these letters of reference will arrive under separate cover if you haven’t included them with your packet of materials.
8. **Do not** use platitudes, hyperbole or cliché in your cover letter. Judges see hundreds of cover letters and are turned off immediately by anything remotely resembling exaggeration, boastfulness, insincere flattery, etc. Highlight your strengths but do not be tempted to oversell yourself!
9. The cover letter must be perfect. It is, essentially, your first writing sample and if it is not well written or contains typos, your application will be rejected immediately. Be sure to address the letter properly (see the resources section for a list of proper ways to address letters and envelopes).

Having said all of the above, you should keep in mind that some judges (and their current law clerks who often screen all of the applications) prefer a straightforward cover letter that gives just the basic information transmitting the application for a clerkship. The only way to find out what a particular judge prefers is to call his secretary or law clerks and ask in a friendly, professional manner.
B. The Writing Sample

Writing is a critical element of a judicial clerkship. Thus, judges generally place great emphasis on the writing sample. Your writing sample should be chosen carefully. It should be well written and well organized. Judges will evaluate the writing sample to determine not only how well you write but also how well you can analyze and organize the issues.

1. Invest the time to create a good writing sample. This piece needs to be flawless. Review a variety of products you have written and pick one or two that you think are best written. You may want to meet with one of your law school professors or with a consultant from Writing Center to discuss your choice and ways of improving it.
2. Length: 5-10 pages. Often, employers will not have time to read an entire sample, so they appreciate evidence that you can be concise. You can offer to supply additional samples if requested.
3. Types: Legal employers want evidence of your ability to do legal analysis similar to what will be expected on the job, so legal memoranda (office memos) and briefs are often best. Papers used for law school classes and law review articles are also good.
4. The writing sample needs to be representative of what you can produce by yourself. Original work is preferable, and you should avoid pieces that are heavily edited. If you submit work that was an assignment for a class, and you received feedback from your professor on an earlier draft, be sure to explain this on a cover sheet for the sample.
5. Before using any work you have completed for an employer as a writing sample, be sure to obtain that employer’s permission. Concerns about confidentiality or litigation strategy may make it inappropriate to submit the document to a judge as a writing sample. If your previous employer gives you permission, you will also need to protect confidentiality by blocking out all identifying names and case numbers.
6. If your writing sample was written months before, spend the time to update it. Shepardize the cases and make sure the legal precedents are current.

C. Letters of Recommendation

1. Some judges ask for letters of recommendation but many judges will accept reference lists first. Check the Judicial Clerkship Information List or contact the judge’s chambers to find out that judge’s preference. Generally, trial court judges will accept reference lists and appellate court judges will accept letters of recommendation.
2. Number of letters of recommendation: Two to three is typical but check with the judge’s secretary to find out exactly how many letters of recommendation are required.
3. Who should you ask to write a letter of recommendation? In general, you should select people who know you and are well acquainted with your writing abilities.
   a. Typically, you should ask law school professors who know you well and in whose classes you performed well. You need to schedule a meeting to get to know any professor who really doesn’t know you.
   b. Consider asking individuals who know the judge. This is very helpful because judges take these letters more seriously.
   c. You can ask lawyers for whom you clerked.
4. Prepare a packet of materials to give to the people who have agreed to write a letter of recommendation. The packet should include copies of your resume, transcript, and writing samples. Even people who are well acquainted with you and your abilities will appreciate being able to refer to specifics contained in these materials.

1. Also provide these individuals with the correct spelling of the judge’s name and his/her complete address. Make sure the letter of recommendation will be addressed to the specific judge, not “To Whom It May Concern.”

2. Recommendation letters can be sent directly to the judge or you can include them in the packet of materials that you submit to the judge. If confidentiality is an issue, the people writing letters of recommendation can place them in a sealed envelope that you then include in the packet.

**D. Resume**

Please refer to the Career Services Handbook for information on resume writing. You should utilize the Career Services Office for individual counseling to discuss your resume in more detail.

1. Include distinctive experiences (anything, within reason, that distinguishes your resume from all the rest on the judge’s desk). Consider including community service, career achievements before law school, foreign languages spoken, unusual travel experiences, music or other unusual abilities or interests. If you find out in your research of a particular judge that you share a common interest, include it in the resume. You might be selected for an interview solely because you share this interest with the judge.

2. Your resume should be on one page, but you may go to two pages if you have extensive work experiences and your resume is too cramped on one page. If you go to two pages, you need to fill the second page. Leaving a large section of “white space” on the second page is not appropriate.

**E. Transcript**

The WSRSL Grade Reports are considered unofficial transcripts and should be included with your application materials. You should keep copies of your Grade Reports in a career file. In the event you no longer have copies of your Grade Reports, you can obtain them from the Registrar’s office.

**F. Interview**

Above all, keep in mind that judges are people. Judges work closely with their law clerks so they want a law clerk with whom they think they will enjoy working. Sheer ability in terms of job skills is not enough. Personality and interpersonal communication skills are important in the interview.

1. Realize that your interview begins when the judge’s secretary calls you to make an appointment for the interview. EVERYONE with whom you come in contact, such as secretaries, court bailiffs, and court reporters will have an opinion about you. Treat these people with respect. Any person on the judge’s staff who has a less than ideal interaction with you can cause your application to be rejected.
2. Be prepared to speak intelligently about the law, your classes and why you selected them, the topic of your seminar class, the substance of your past work experiences, your writing sample, and your plans for the future.

3. Read a representative sampling of the judge’s opinions. Be familiar with recent opinions as well as noteworthy opinions. Pay attention to dissents and concurring opinions. These are opinions that the judge felt strongly about and will be more likely to remember and discuss. Awareness of opinions:
   a. Will impress the judge and give you an opportunity to interject into the conversation.
   b. May indicate substantive areas that the judge will want to discuss.

4. Research other aspects of the judge. There are a variety of resources for finding out additional information about judges.
   a. Read the judge’s biography. Almanac of the Federal Judiciary and The American Bench: Judges of the Nation are both great resources for information about judges that may not be widely known.
   b. Talk to the judge’s former law clerks. (Lists of WSRSL alumni who have clerked for judges the past few years are available on the Judicial Clerkship Information List). Talk to them to determine what the judge is looking for and find out more about his/her interview style.
   c. Find recent news stories about the judge by searching on Lexis, Westlaw, or doing a google search.

5. After an interview, judges often have candidates speak to their current clerks. Take it seriously. Judges are often influenced by their current clerks’ comments.

3. Prepare questions! Demonstrate that you know something about the judge and the court. (See the list of sample interview questions of Behind the Bench: The Guide to Judicial Clerkships – available in the Career Library).

4. Participate in one of the Mock Interview programs scheduled in the fall and spring. Do what it takes to prepare for the interview process. A mock interview will help you practice your “articulate responses” and ease those pre-interview jitters.

G. Follow Up with a Letter of Thanks

It is always a good idea to write a formal letter of thanks to the judge after an interview. You can use the thank you letter to send some follow up information such as an additional writing sample or an official transcript, if requested by the judge. Also write a thank you letter to the judge’s current law clerks if they interviewed you as well. Sample thank you letters are included in the Career Services Handbook.

H. Former Law Clerks at WSRSL

Consult with faculty and staff who have had judicial clerkships for their advice and assistance.
Judicial Clerkship Resources

To make an informed decision about which judges to apply to for clerkships, you must do your research. The following resources will help you find out what you need to know about the judges to whom you are interested in applying.

For clerkships in Hawai’i, go first to our Judicial Clerkship resource list on Symplicity. There you will find the names of all Hawai’i judges, their requirements for applicants, time lines, and the names of alumni clerks.

**Almanac of the Federal Judiciary**
Lawletters, Inc.
  - Volume 1: Profiles of U.S. District Court Judges
  - Volume 2: Profiles of U.S. Court of Appeals Judges
Contains detailed biographical information on all federal judges including publications, noteworthy rulings, affiliations, associations, and lawyers' evaluations.
Also available on Westlaw.

**The American Bench: Judges of the Nation**
Reginald Bishop, Forster & Assoc.
Contains biographies of federal and state judges. Covers judicial structure of each state and contains judicial boundary maps.

**Behind the Bench: The Guide to Judicial Clerkships** (available in CSO library)
Debra M. Strauss, The BarBri Group, Inc.
Comprehensive new book covers everything you need to know - the value of a clerkship, the keys to success in finding one, a description of the various types and overview of the different courts, how to choose the best for you (court and judge), nuts and bolts on completing applications, and interviewing tips.

**Federal Judges Biographical Database**
Federal Judicial Center
Available at http://air.fjc.gov/history/judges_frm.html, this database contains biographical information on federal judges.

**Judicial Clerkship Web Site**
Available at www.judicialclerkships.com, this database provides comprehensive information on judicial clerkships. It lists all of the names and addresses of all state and federal courts in the United States. It has biographical information on judges. It also lists available clerkships.
1. To access information on judicial clerkships, sign on to Lexis and select the Reference link under "Explore Sources." Then, select the Career Development link. Select a resource to search from the list displayed.
   - To identify clerkship programs within a particular city or jurisdiction, select the NALP Judicial Clerkship Directory. Search #1: address(new york)  Search #2: court(bankruptcy)
   - To find graduates of WSRSL who have served as judicial law clerks, select the NALP Judicial Clerkship Directory. Search: clerk-00/01(Honolulu) or clerk-01/02(Honolulu) or other-schools(Honolulu)
   - To prepare for an interview by uncovering background information about a particular judge, select The Martindale-Hubbell Directory. Search: name(john /3 doe).
   - Select Judicial Staff Directory. Search: name(john /3 doe).

2. Also search news sources for recent news articles about judges. After signing onto Lexis, select News, then select News Group File, click on Most Recent 90 Days. Search: john /3 doe.


NALP Federal and State Judicial Clerkship Directory
National Association for Law Placement (NALP)

The NALP Clerkship Directory contains information regarding the hiring practices of state judges. It is available in the Career Services Office. It is also available on LexisNexis.

In 2000, NALP conducted an extensive survey of judicial law clerks. The results of the study can be found at www.nalp.org/nalpresearch/clrksumm.htm.

The timeline for applying for clerkships that was adopted by federal judges and endorsed by NALP is discussed at www.nalp.org/schools/judgerel.htm. For additional information on the new Law Clerk Hiring Plan and timeline, go to www.cadc.uscourts.gov/Lawclerk/lawclerk.asp.

NALP has recently published two articles on judicial clerkships:

National Center for State Courts
Available at www.ncsconline.org. Includes links to federal, international and state court websites as well as a number of local and municipal court websites.

Want's Directory of State Court Clerks & County Courthouses
Want Publishing Company
Contains names, addresses and telephone numbers of state courts. Also includes a listing of State attorneys general and their staffs.

Want's Federal-State Court Directory
Want Publishing Company
Contains names, addresses and telephone numbers of federal judges, Canadian Court clerks and courthouses, and addresses of highest courts around the world. Also contains state court directory listings and helpful organizational charts. Note that this information is also available on-line, at www.courts.com. It is updated with new appointments.
Westlaw
Featured on Westlaw are the West's Legal Directory of Judicial Clerkships (WLD-CLERK) and the Almanac of the Federal Judiciary (AFJ). The following overview demonstrates the databases and searches most useful for discovering information about judges and judicial clerkships on Westlaw:

**Database: WLD-CLERK** Contains West's Legal Directory of Judicial Clerkships, which is a database derived from judges' responses to questionnaires. To find a listing for a particular judge, type his/her name in the Hiring Judge text box. You can also utilize as searchable the test boxes for Selection Criteria (e.g., type in "law review") or Past and Present Clerks (e.g., type in "Hawaii").

**Database: WLD-JUDGE** West's Legal Directory of Judges. Includes contact information as well as information on the judge's education, work history, published works, and significant decisions. Enter the particular judge's name in the Judge's Name blank.

**Database: WLD-COURT** Contains West's Legal Directory of Courts, which provides information about state courts as well (enter the word "state" in the Court blank).

**Database: AFJ** Carries the Almanac of the Federal Judiciary described above.

**Database: WLD** To find the names of attorneys who have clerked for a particular judge, click "Terms & Connectors" in the Search type box, and enter the search, e.g., stephen /3 breyer /s clerk.

**Database: ALLNEWS** Search to find recent stories about noteworthy cases in which a particular judge has been involved, e.g., judge /s barrington /s parker.

**Database Search - Judicial Opinions** To find opinions the judge has written, run a segment search in the database of the court in which the judge is located. For example, ju(parker).

Another valuable resource available on Westlaw is AttorneyJobsOnline, which allows students to search for clerkships as well as other legal jobs across the country. To access AttorneyJobsOnline, go to Westlaw first. Do not sign in. Rather, click on the CAREERS/AJO button. Then, click on AJO/Law Student Jobs Online. Then click on LawStudentJobsOnline and enter your Westlaw password.
## Addressing Cover Letters to Judges

### Federal Courts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Addressee</th>
<th>Address on cover letter and envelope</th>
<th>Salutation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>U.S. Supreme Court</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
| The Chief Justice | The Honorable (full name) Chief Justice of the United States  
The Supreme Court  
1 First Street, N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20543 | Dear Chief Justice (last name):  |
| Associate Justice | The Honorable (full name) Associate Justice  
The Supreme Court  
1 First Street, N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20543 | Dear Justice (last name):  |

| **U.S. Court of Appeals** |                                                                                                        |                                |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|                                |
| Chief Judge               | The Honorable (full name)  
Chief Judge  
United States Court of Appeals  
for the (Number-th) Circuit  
Address | Dear Judge (last name):  |
| Senior Judge              | The Honorable (full name)  
Senior Judge  
United States Court of Appeals  
for the (Number-th) Circuit  
Address | Dear Judge (last name):  |
| Judge                     | The Honorable (full name)  
United States Court of Appeals  
for the (Number-th) Circuit  
Address | Dear Judge (last name):  |

| **U.S. District Court** |                                                                                                        |                                |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|                                |
| Chief Judge              | The Honorable (full name)  
Chief Judge  
United States District Court  
for the (District Name)  
Address | Dear Judge (last name):  |
| Senior Judge             | The Honorable (full name)  
Senior Judge  
United States District Court  
for the (District Name)  
Address | Dear Judge (last name):  |
| Judge                    | The Honorable (full name)  
United States District Court  
for the (District Name)  
Address | Dear Judge (last name):  |
U.S. Magistrate Judge:

Judge  The Honorable (full name)  Dear Judge (last name):
United States Magistrate Judge
United States District Court for
the (District Name)
Address

U.S. Bankruptcy Judge:

Chief Judge  The Honorable Judge (full name)  Dear Judge (last name):
Chief Judge
United States Bankruptcy Court
for the (District Name)
Address

Judge  The Honorable Judge (full name)  Dear Judge (last name):
United States Bankruptcy Court
for the (District Name)
Address

Other Federal Courts

Chief Judge  The Honorable (full name)  Dear Judge (last name):
Chief Judge
Name of Court
Address

Judge  The Honorable (full name)  Dear Judge (last name):
Name of Court
Address

State Courts

State Supreme Court:

Chief Justice  The Honorable (full name)  Dear Chief Justice (last name):
Chief Justice
Supreme Court for the State
(Commonwealth) of (State)
Address

Justice  The Honorable (full name)  Dear Justice (last name):
Supreme Court for the State
(Commonwealth) of (State)
Address

State Court of Appeals:

Chief Judge  The Honorable (full name)  Dear Judge (last name):
Chief Judge
Court of Appeals for the State
Judge

The Honorable (full name)
Court of Appeals for the State
(Commonwealth) of (State)
Address

Dear Judge (last name):

District Courts:

Chief Judge

The Honorable (full name)
Chief Judge
District Court for the State
(Commonwealth) of (State)
(Number-th) Judicial District
Address

Dear Judge (last name):

Judge

The Honorable (full name)
District Court for the State
(Commonwealth) of (State)
(Number-th) Judicial District
Address

Dear Judge (last name):
Emily P. Jones  
1234 Any Street  ♦  Honolulu, Hawaii  96822  ♦  808-555-1234  ♦  ejones15@yahoo.com

September 2, 2008

The Honorable John D. Doe  
United States District Court  
for the District of Hawaii  
400 Ala Moana Boulevard  
Honolulu, Hawaii  96805

Dear Judge Doe:

I am a third year law student at the William S. Richardson School of Law. I am applying for the position of judicial law clerk in your chambers beginning in the fall of 2009.

We met recently at the Business and Law Organization meeting at the law school when you came to speak about commercial litigation. I am interested in becoming a litigator and learned a great deal from your remarks. I never realized that juries view commercial cases from a tort perspective while the clients think only in terms of contract. This insight is one I will remember throughout my career. I am sure that your remarks about commercial litigation represent just a small fraction of the practical and valuable information I could learn while working for you.

A good lawyer communicates well in writing. As my resume reflects, I have sought out many opportunities to improve my research and writing skills. I received the highest grade in my legal writing class as a first year student and was a finalist for the Well-Done Writing Award. During my second year, I worked as a research assistant for two professors at the law school, researching and drafting chapters for their respective casebooks. This past summer, I clerked for the Honolulu firm of Able & Able. There, I wrote twelve memos and three briefs concerning a wide variety of issues. These experiences should provide me with the tools to succeed as a judicial law clerk.

I have enclosed a resume, transcript, and writing sample consisting of one of the briefs I wrote this summer. Arriving under separate cover will be letters of recommendation from Professors CanDoWell and YouBetcha as well as Mr. Mike Able, my previous employer.

It would be an honor and a privilege to clerk for you. Thank you for your consideration of my application. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Emily P. Jones

Encl.

1234 Any Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii  96822  
808-555-1234  
jsmith10@hotmail.com
June 16, 2009

The Honorable Susan R. Jones  
Maui County District Court  
7325 South High Street  
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793

Dear Judge Jones:

I am a third year law student at the William S. Richardson School of Law applying for the judicial clerkship position available in the fall of 2010. Enclosed please find a resume, writing sample, transcript, and two letters of recommendation for your consideration.

Last fall, I interned in the Maui County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office. This experience confirmed my commitment to spend my career in the courtroom as a state prosecutor. My co-workers in the Prosecuting Attorney's Office and my law school professors have advised me that it would be most beneficial to clerk for a year before applying to the Prosecuting Attorney’s Office because the view from behind the bench provides a critical perspective on the entire criminal justice system.

I have worked hard in law school to build the skills necessary to become a good lawyer. My legal research and writing skills have improved significantly over the past two years. As a first year law student, the brief I wrote for my legal writing class was chosen for consideration for the Legal Practice Writing Award. Last year, I was selected to participate on the Law Review. I have written a law review article concerning the new practice of allowing jurors to ask questions during trials. Also, during my internship, as well as my law clerk position with the Honolulu firm of Good, Best & Better, I researched and wrote numerous memos on many legal issues. These experiences will provide me with a solid foundation as a judicial law clerk.

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,

Jonathan Smith

Encl.
September 2, 2003

1234 Anywhere Lane, #56
Waipahu, Hawaii 96812

The Honorable F. Stephen Jones
Chief Judge
United States Court of Appeals
for the Xth Circuit
789 North 30th Street
Somewhere, Iowa 12345

Dear Judge Jones:

Please consider me for a judicial clerkship beginning in Fall of _________. I am a _________ year law student at the William S. Richardson School of law and believe I have the skills necessary to be an effective law clerk.

In my career, I have pursued a lifelong interest and passion for language and writing. As a voracious reader I had the ideal job before law school. Among other fine publishers, Atlantic Monthly Press, Grove Press and University of Minnesota Press paid me to read and summarize forthcoming books for client bookstores. Over a two-year period, I have read 300 books, ranging from fiction and political science to natural history and fly-fishing. I sometimes found it hard to believe that I earned a living doing what I enjoyed so much.

My appreciation of well-written prose has been a significant benefit in law school. I enjoy legal writing and have gained considerable experience doing so through my position as Managing Editor of the Water Court Reporter, a quarterly publication on Hawaii water law, and as a faculty research assistant.

Enclosed please find my resume, transcript, letters of recommendation and an article I wrote as Managing Editor of the Water Court Reporter. I would like to meet with you and discuss how I could assist your work. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your consideration of my application.

Respectfully,

Karen Anderson

Encl.
September 2, 2003

1234 Somewhere Lane
Laie, Hawaii  54321

The Honorable Peter T. Johnson
United States District Court
for the District of Wyoming
123 South 3rd Street
Cheyenne, Wyoming  12345

Dear Judge Johnson,

Please accept this letter as application for a position as a law clerk. My resume, transcript, and a writing sample are enclosed for your review and consideration.

As my resume indicates, I believe that I have the necessary skills to perform as a law clerk. I also offer, however, an eclectic background that will allow me to bring a broader perspective to my work responsibilities.

I would describe myself as firmly committed to excellence. I have always responded to challenges in a very positive fashion. My discipline and drive initially manifested themselves through tennis. Balancing tennis with studies, I became one of the nation's top ranked juniors, tried out for the U.S. Olympic team and competed on the Association of Tennis Professionals World Tour, earning a world ranking in 1999.

I have also met intellectual challenges with the same vigor. While in college, I developed a passion for reading through which the breadth of my interests and experiences multiplied. I became one of the first twenty Peace Corps volunteers in Turkmenistan, a break-away republic of the former Soviet Union. I worked with the International Monetary Fund to convert the Turkmen currency from rubles to manat and taught English amidst disease and poverty, often without heat, hot water, or plumbing.

Now my focus has turned to law. I bring to this pursuit the same energy and commitment that have enabled me to excel in the past. I look forward to an opportunity to interview with you. Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

Cynthia Smith
Encl.