

Finding Your Way

Have you ever wondered how you got to where you are?

As I look out my office window, the scenery is vastly different from the pine trees and pastureland I saw daily in my youth. Instead of cattle grazing, I see cars dashing around town. I remember being so overwhelmed when I first moved to Dallas. Growing up in a small town an hour north of Houston, my family rarely traveled to Big D. I got completely lost when I came up for a job interview after graduating from college. I actually referred to the stunning Fountain Place tower on the corner of Ross Avenue and Field Street as the Ewing Oil building (I had watched *Dallas* religiously every Friday night). Shockingly, I still got the job!

For the first few months, I kept to the same route daily and didn't veer too far off my known path, limiting my comings and goings to work, my tiny less-than-600-square-foot apartment, and

the local grocery store. But, as is often the case, I slowly started to branch out and learn new areas of town and decided to stay for law school.

When I started classes at SMU, I was quickly introduced to foreign concepts like "summary judgment" and "intestacy." Now such terms are a part of my everyday vernacular, but I remember feeling like I was the only person on the planet who didn't know what these meant. (I had a similar feeling during my first undergrad accounting class at A&M where people were talking about *widgets*!)

During the spring semester of my first year of law school, I went to the Dallas Association of Young Lawyers' informational meeting about a summer internship program with local judges. Not having other work plans, I signed up. Looking back, that simple decision to participate as an intern greatly impacted my career.

I received a call from Judge Karen Gren Scholer—formerly of Dallas County's 95th Judicial District Court—to interview for the position. She took an interest in me and introduced me not only to the Dallas County court system and judges but also to local attorneys. (I cannot thank Judge Scholer enough for the education, advice, and encouragement I received.) I had the opportunity to expand my summer internship with Judge Scholer and serve as her clerk during the school year. I credit my internship with helping me get interviews during my second year of law school. And I believe the experience I received working with Judge Scholer was a definite springboard into my initial job offer out of law school.

I'm very aware that it is increasingly difficult for law students to find meaningful internships that provide the "real-world" work experience that law firms or government entities often require. So, this year TYLA is creating the *Interns Across Texas Program*, a statewide summer internship program, much like the one I participated in through the DAYL. The goal of the Web-based *Interns Across Texas Program* is to increase the availability of unpaid judicial internships by connecting law students with state and federal judges who seek well-qualified interns. Students will apply for summer, fall, or spring semester internships online, and the judges will receive applications electronically. The user-friendly site allows judges to easily sort and select the best-suited applicant for each position. If you are interested in participating in the program, please apply at tyla.org/internsacrosstexas or email Alex Roberts (aroberts@beckredde.com) or Travis Patterson (tpatterson@shannongracey.com).

There are certainly other decisions and people that greatly impacted my life, but as far as my legal career is concerned, I am grateful that Judge Scholer selected me as one of her interns. So now, as I sit here, my view of skyscrapers and parking garages feels familiar—like home. **TBJ**

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