



Ep. 28: The McGlinchey Summer Associate Experience

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The summer associate experience is one that law students look forward to, and many build careers upon. In the current environment of flexibility and inclusivity, how has the clerk experience changed?

Zelma Frederick: Hi, I'm **Zelma Frederick**, and I'm a member in the firm's Baton Rouge office. I handle construction and complex commercial litigation, and I'm currently the chair of the firm's Summer Associate program. I'm joined today by my friend and colleague **Amanda Stout**, as well as by some of our current summer associates, who we will get to know in a few moments. So, welcome Amanda.

Amanda Stout: Hi, Zelma.

Zelma Frederick: Let's start off with an easy question. Tell us a little about yourself and your practice.

Amanda Stout: I have been with McGlinchey for over 15 years and currently work in the commercial litigation section. So I handle a wide variety of commercial litigation and labor and employment matters. I've been involved with the firm's clerkship program since I started with the firm 15 years ago. The most direct involvement as it relates to interviewing and hiring summer associates and directing activities of our summer program really started about 10 years ago.

Zelma Frederick: We're talking about the program today. So why don't you tell us a little bit about the firm's clerkship program?

Amanda Stout: Sure, Zelma. The firm participates in on-campus interviews in the fall at the law schools that are within our office footprint. Historically we hire law clerks for our Baton Rouge, Louisiana Cleveland, Houston, New Orleans, Fort Lauderdale, and DC offices. This changes yearly and we are open to hosting law clerks in any of our 15 offices. We are interviewing 2L law students for a clerkship to be held during the summer between their second and third year of law school. The firm is also a member of the Leadership Council

on Legal Diversity (LCLD) and has been a member since its founding in 2009. One of the goals of this council is to promote diversity within the legal profession. So in conjunction with our work on this council, we offer an LCLD scholarship each year for a 1L law student. Our offices rotate who hosts the LCLD law clerk each year. This year, our 1L LCLD scholar was Sally Jo, who clerked the first half of the summer in our DC office. So in addition to the summer clerkship, the LCLD scholar also has a mentor who is available to assist them during their law school career.

Zelma Frederick: And you said that that LCLD scholar rotates each year and is hosted by a different office?

Amanda Stout: Yes, that's correct. This year, the scholar was in our DC office. Our New Orleans office has hosted a scholar in the past, our Houston office, as well as a number of our other offices as well.

Zelma Frederick: Thanks. Can you share a little bit about what our goal is as the planners for the summer programming? What's the point? What are we all doing here, from our perspective?

We also want to give summer associates opportunities to see the business side of law. And so as part of that, we have programming each summer which is designed to help law students succeed as a lawyer, wherever they may land.

Amanda Stout: I like to think of summer recruiting as a little like dating. We're trying each other out to see if we fit well together. Of course, we're looking for summer associates who have strong academic credentials. But then once you get here, we're really looking for a well-rounded person who can do the work and do good work, but also fit in with the culture of our firm and be a potential future leader of the firm. We want to give our associates research projects and opportunities to attend depositions and court hearings, trials, client meetings, and the like, but we also want to give summer associates opportunities to see the business side of law. And so as part of that, we have programming each summer which is designed to help law students succeed as a lawyer, wherever they may land. Some of the programs we've hosted in the past include how to use social media to market yourself, how to market yourself to clients and potential clients, and on legal writing. We also host an associate panel where the law clerks are able to have a candid discussion with several associates from across all of our offices about their experiences and joining a law firm. And what it's like to be a new associate.

Zelma Frederick: Because everybody knows the old saying is that "everybody goes to law school, but it doesn't really teach you how to be a lawyer."

Amanda Stout: Right. That's correct.

Zelma Frederick: The secret is out on that. Okay. Well, thanks for your time, Amanda. I'd like to kind of switch gears here and just jump right into it with a few of our current summer associates.

Today, I'm joined by **Taylor Bennington** who attends the University of Akron School of Law. He's currently clerking in our Cleveland office. He also plays a mean game of trivia. We played trivia earlier in the summer and it was great. We also have **Sara Grasc**. She's here with Amanda and me in the Baton Rouge office. She's a student at Louisiana State University, and so far has been to probably two trials, a bail trial, and all things patent and IP law. We also have two clerks in our New Orleans office right now. The first is **Gillian Miculek**, who is a student at LSU as well, and **Erica Powell**, who attends Tulane University. And I've seen some pictures of some fun lunches at Galatoire's and places like that. So I think, you know, that's the other element of this program is that we like to have a little fun during our "courtship" as well.

So welcome guys, glad that y'all are able to join us today. I'm going to jump right in and have a round-robin about all things "clerk life" at the firm. And we're going to start with you, Erica, if you can share what made you decide to clerk with McGlinchey?

Erica Powell: I mean, I guess like everybody else, I went on the website to look up what the firm did and who were the people. And the firm's website really caught my eye because it was really colorful and kind of fun. And you know, it wasn't stuffy, like some other law firms have on their website.

Zelma Frederick: That's good to hear!

Erica Powell: It was also really diverse. There are a lot of women, there were black women and, you know, just all kinds of people. And they also had a lot of different practice areas. So that interested me as well, and I knew that I would be able to get all kinds of experience. And so when I got the job offer, I was like, "okay, yeah, this is definitely where I want to spend the six weeks of summer." So that's why I chose McGlinchey.

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Zelma Frederick: So you would say it was love at first sight for you, going with our analogy here?

Erica Powell: Pretty much! Yeah, I guess so.

Zelma Frederick: And thanks for the kudos on the website. That rolled out right after the pandemic hit. And it is, it is really fun. It's not the typical law firm website, I think. Thanks for noticing.

Sara, you're up next. I know you've had a ball of fun with us here in Baton Rouge. Can you share one surprising thing that you learned this summer?

Sara Grasc: So, one thing that I quickly realized during the summer associate program, is that there's no "mold" that you have to fit into as a lawyer. A lawyer can really just be anyone. I

mean, here at McGlinchey, everyone has diverse personalities and diverse backgrounds, but at the end of the day, it all just fits together, and they all work so well together. And, as a law student, it's so comforting to know that I can be myself while practicing my chosen profession in the future.

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Zelma Frederick: Thanks so much for that. Okay, Gillian, you're up next. Tell me what you hope to get out of your summer clerking experience.

Gillian Miculek: So the main thing for me, when I was looking for a summer experience, was exposure to different practice areas. I've always been interested in business litigation, and that can mean a lot of different things. And I didn't necessarily want to commit to a job that was just going to be labor and employment, or just going to be consumer finance, because a lot of times when you're in summer programs, they put you in a specific area. But from my interview on, they've made it very clear that at McGlinchey, they want us to see everything. So, so far I've had projects in labor and employment, I've done white-collar crime, I've done general lit. So I like the variety, and that's really what I wanted. And I think you don't know what you like until you have experience with everything. So I appreciate McGlinchey's push for us to have a diverse experience here, and really they support us in finding our way.

Zelma Frederick: So you're about three weeks into your clerkship. You've already had a pretty broad array of assignments. Is anything kind of sticking out at you as being more interesting than not?

Gillian Miculek: I really like labor and employment, and you don't get a lot of exposure to that in law school, maybe one class that mentions Title IX at some point. But you don't have exposure to these practice areas in law school, and you don't know until you're at a firm that exposes you to these areas that this is even a possibility for your career. So that's been really exciting.

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Zelma Frederick: Yeah, I think that makes sense. I think out of law school, I'd worked at a bankruptcy firm and so I knew a lot about bankruptcy. That's what I thought I wanted to do. But the main thing out of law school, when I was clerking was, I knew what I didn't want to do. And that was, for me, family and criminal law. Honorable practice areas, not for Zelma.

So here we come last, but not least we're coming up to Taylor. Taylor, do you have any advice for other law clerks who are about to go through the on-campus interview process, and who are about to go through this in their law school career?

Taylor Bennington: Yeah, I guess I will keep in line here in saying that it's okay to have a diverse experience. When I first was applying to be a summer law clerk, I had it in my mind that I wanted to be a litigator. And when I got offered this position at McGlinchey in the consumer financial services section, you know, that was kind of interesting. I was like, "well, I never thought I'd do that." But after having this experience this summer, I've been opened up to this whole new idea of what the law is and what it can mean. And I've fallen in love with it. And I've fallen in love with the firm as well. So I would tell my colleagues in law school, don't just turn something down because you have this preconceived idea as to what it might be.

Zelma Frederick: And have you also had different, maybe in the same practice, but different types of projects, or have you been really just enjoying kind of one thing?

I would tell my colleagues in law school, don't just turn something down because you have this preconceived idea as to what it might be. Don't be scared if you're offered a specific track, because even in one niche area of law can be this entire host of different subject areas you can work in.

Taylor Bennington: Yeah, that's the beauty too of our section is that, you know, it's called consumer financial services, but it encompasses a wide array of different practice areas, even within our section. I would give the advice to say, don't be scared if you're offered a specific track because even in one niche area of law can be this entire host of different subject areas you can work in.

Zelma Frederick: I think that's great advice. My practice has certainly changed and I'm sure Amanda would say the same thing. So I think that's really good advice. Okay. Well, this has been a really great discussion. I actually would love to keep talking, but the billable hour is still there.

Thanks, y'all, for sharing all your insight and experiences and actually just on a personal note, thanks for being candid about your thoughts about the firm. Little things about, you know, hearing about what drew you in from our website, or the appreciation for our efforts to expose you to more than just kind of rote, repetitive work. It goes a long way for Amanda and I and the whole team that work on this programming. Thanks for your time, and we hope you enjoy the final weeks of your clerkship.

Gillian Miculek: Thank you so much for having us.

Erica Powell: Thank you.

Sara Grsch: Thanks so much.

Taylor Bennington: Thank you very much.

Amanda Stout: Thank you, everyone.

Thanks for tuning into this episode of "More with McGlinchey." If you have a question or would like to propose a topic, we'd love to hear from you at podcast@mcglinchey.com. For additional resources on this topic, please visit mcglinchey.com. On behalf of the law firm that brings you more, we hope you'll join U.S. next time.



Zelma Frederick
Member, Baton Rouge
(225) 382-3615
zfrederick@mcglinchey.com



Amanda Stout
Of Counsel, Baton Rouge
(504) 596-2763
cbryant@mcglinchey.com



Taylor Bennington
Summer Associate, Cleveland
University of Akron School of
Law



Sara Grsch
Summer Associate,
Baton Rouge
LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center



Gillian Miculek
Summer Associate,
New Orleans
LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center



Erica Powell
Summer Associate,
New Orleans
Tulane University School of Law

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