

Alumni Spotlight Reviews



MICKELL SUMMERHAYS

Brief work history and current employer: Dickinson Wright

Year of Legislative Legal internship: Spring 2018 (53rd Legislature, 2nd Regular Session)

Favorite memory: I enjoyed seeing my research put into action in Rules committee meetings. It was great to hear my words read by the attorneys when they reported to the committee. It was a definitive way to see that my legal contributions were not only helpful, but essential to the attorneys doing their job.

What was the best skill or knowledge gained? The best knowledge I gained was about the Arizona Constitution. I'm originally from another state, and spending so much time studying the Arizona Constitution made me feel very patriotic for the state and its constitution.

PETER BROWN

Brief work history and current employer: AutoMon, LLC (2015-2016); City of Scottsdale Attorney's Office, Civil Division (Summer 2017); The Brebner Law Firm (Fall/Winter 2017); Comitz | Beethe (Current Employer)

Year of Legislative Legal internship: Spring 2018 (53rd Legislature, 2nd Regular session)

Favorite memory: Being relentlessly reminded by Darci, Norma, Tim and Krystle to get food on the Capitol Lawn or in the Rules Office.

What was the best skill or knowledge gained? The best knowledge I've gained is a better understanding of and familiarity with Arizona's Constitution. I've gained a deeper insight into the state-level lawmaking process. I've also learned how to effectively communicate the unconstitutional aspects of a bill to the lawmaker proposing it.



MADDALENA SAVARY

Year of Legislative Legal Internship: Spring 2017 (53rd Legislature, First Regular Session)

Brief work history and current employer: Immediately following the Session, I was an extern at the Arizona Attorney General Civil Rights Unit. Currently, I am completing my last year of law school at ASU College of Law, including an externship with the Arizona Supreme Court. Immediately following law school, I plan to Clerk for the Arizona Court of Appeals, Division One. I would like to follow that with a position working in Arizona legislation and policy.

Favorite memory: How much those that work at the Legislature love their jobs! It was a blessing to work closely with the exceptionally skilled and knowledgeable staff at the Legislature and to see their dedication and talent up close. As a student and an Arizona voter, I appreciate having the opportunity to learn about our legislative process and to get to know the people that make its wheels turn.

And, I fondly remember watching Sine Die (end of the legislative session) during *daylight* hours!

What was the best skill or knowledge gained: Knowledge of the Arizona systems and networking with the legislative staff. Through my internship, I had the opportunity to work with the Rules Attorneys, as well as Members, policy staff, and the Legislative Council. I was able to substantively participate in our legislative process and to build relationships with those working in Arizona legislation and policy.



ESTHER SIVAK

Year of Legislative Legal Internship: Spring 2017 (53rd Regular Session, First Regular Session)

Brief work history and current employer: I am currently interning with the U.S. Attorney's Office. I have clerked for the Arizona Governor's Office of General Counsel and for Schmitt Schneck Casey Even & Williams— a private law firm in Phoenix. I have also worked as a law clerk for the Goldwater Institute. Prior to entering law school, I was a Financial Manager for the Arizona Department of Economic Security and was heavily involved in government administration.

Favorite memory: Helping draft a bill that was enacted into law.

What was the best skill or knowledge gained: I gained tremendous experience analyzing both the U.S. Constitution and the Arizona Constitution. My internship at the Arizona House of Representatives as a legal intern for the House Majority General Counsel was an amazing and illuminating experience. I was exposed to relevant and interesting legal issues covering a broad spectrum of law and policy. Working for the House Majority General Counsel provides not only an opportunity to improve your legal research and writing skills but it also provides you with a unique opportunity to see the inner workings of legislative politics.

HON. DANIELLE VIOLA (Maricopa County Superior Court)

Year of Legislative Legal Internship: Spring 1999

Brief work history and current employer: In September 1998, I started working at Snell & Wilmer, LLP as an associate in the Commercial Litigation practice group. I continued my practice with Snell & Wilmer and was elected partner in 2005. In May 2011, I left the firm after being appointed by Governor Brewer to fill a vacancy on the Maricopa County Superior Court. Between May 2011 and June 2014, I was assigned to a Family Court calendar. I have been handling a Criminal calendar since July 2014.

Favorite memory: Working with the Rules attorneys and reading news articles about legislation that I researched and analyzed.

What was the best skill or knowledge gained? Learning the legislative process and developing a greater appreciation for the relationship between the three branches of government served me well in my practice and in my role on the bench. The opportunity to analyze statutes and legislative history gave me an advantage in many legal matters that involved questions of statutory construction and interpretation.

AMY DIAZ (formerly WUEBBLES)

Year of Legislative Legal Internship: Spring 2002

Brief work history and current employer: I am a diplomat with the U.S. Department of State. Currently, I head up the U.S. Department of State's Counter-Narcotics program in Afghanistan. Prior to that, I served as the Embassy Panama's Coordinator for the Summit of the Americas, and before that I was the Internal Political Unit Chief in Georgia. I started working at the Department of State in 2002, as a Presidential Management Fellow.

Favorite memory: Writing a memo explaining why a proposed legislative initiative was unconstitutional and being told by a legislator that he believed my analysis was correct, but he was still going to pass the legislation.

What was the best skill or knowledge gained? I learned how to quickly draft legal briefs, defend an opinion, and understand that politics will often triumph common sense. These are all skills that have served me well as a diplomat.

GEORGE SARAFIN

Year of Legislative Legal Internship: I interned at the House of Representatives for the Rules Office in the Spring of 2011.

Brief work history and current employer: I have worked for the Glendale City Prosecutor's Office as an Assistant City Prosecutor for four and half years (since March 2012). Before that, I worked at R&R Partners, a lobbying firm that worked at the Arizona House of Representatives and Arizona Senate. Earlier than that, I was a Page for many years at the House of Representatives.

Favorite Memory: This is a tough one. There were a lot of memorable moments while I was working at the Rules Office and the House of Representatives. Probably my favorite moment was getting to sit in on the House Rules Committee agenda meetings and getting to see the inner workings of the Legislature. Also, I enjoyed writing legislative memos for the House Rules Office on the constitutionality of proposed legislation.

What was the best skill or knowledge gained? The best skill I learned was how to effectively research legal issues via Westlaw and LexisNexis and harnessing those skills into writing a legal memo. I also learned that all the work that goes into drafting legislation and the various steps involved into getting a piece of legislation passed.

EMILY GILDAR WAGNER

Year of Legislative Legal Internship: Spring 2011

Brief work history and current employer: I joined Snell & Wilmer upon graduating from law school in 2011. I am now a fifth-year associate at Snell & Wilmer. I specialize in commercial bankruptcy.

Favorite memory: Attending committee meetings and seeing my research and analysis conveyed to committee members (and presumably impacting their decisions).

What was the best skill or knowledge gained? Legislative research and analysis. Knowledge of how the Arizona Legislature works.

NATHAN WADE

Year of Legislative Legal Internship: Spring 2012

Brief Work History and Current Employer: Upon graduation in May of 2013, I immediately began clerking for the Hon. Sarah Simmons, who was the presiding judge of the Pima County Court System. After about 11 months, I transitioned into a position as Assistant Public Defender in Pima County, which I have now been doing for just under four years. Additionally, I work with Arizona Attorneys for Criminal Justice on their Legislative Policy committee, which takes advantage of the experience I gained through my legislative legal internship. In both my position as a public defender and on the Legislative Policy committee, there are many issues that are “hot” right now that directly impact my work, including sentencing reform, marijuana legalization and the repercussions for that across several areas of practice, and funding models for rehabilitation and incarceration to name a few.

Favorite Memory: There are so many great memories. First, the opportunity to work with a brilliant attorney like Rhonda Barnes was something that taught me so much. Add in the passion of her, the rest of the House Democratic staff and the other interns, and it was an inspiring and wonderful place to be. Also, getting to know some of the Legislators as human beings, outside of the political spectrum and seeing how much they cared about their communities was something I’ll never forget.

Best Skill or Knowledge Gained: For me, it was learning how to navigate the legislative process, particularly with the makeup of this particular Legislature. Often, the goals of many of the organizations I work with are not always ones that on the surface would be attractive to the current Legislature, but learning how to sell your legislative priorities, partner with the right legislators and get a place at the table was invaluable. Additionally, understanding legislative intent behind bills and statutes (and how to research and find it) gives me a lot more to work with when I am looking at my cases.

ASHLEE HOFFMANN

Year of Legislative Legal Internship: Spring 2013

Brief work history and current employer: After graduating in May 2014, I was a judicial law clerk for Judge Thumma at the Arizona Court of Appeals. I clerked for a year before joining the Arizona Attorney General's Office, where I worked for the Civil and Criminal Litigation and Advice ("CLA") section. While in CLA, I represented the Division of Developmental Disabilities for their litigation, contract, and policy & advice needs. CLA also works with DES and DCS during the legislative session to track and analyze relevant bills, so my experience at the Legislature was very helpful.

Recently, I transferred to the Appeals Unit in Mesa, where I mostly work on DCS appeals/special actions (and occasionally DES appeals/special actions).

Favorite memory: It's difficult to pick one specific memory that is my favorite. But any memories that come to mind inevitably involve candid conversations with Tim and Don (House Rules Attorneys) discussing the reasoning and motivations behind certain bills, House procedural rules, or the world in general. Both attorneys were founts of knowledge with a ton of experience and they were more than willing to sit down with an intern/extern to answer any questions. The entire House Rules Attorney's Office was welcoming and, beyond the amazing learning experience, the time I spent with the people really made the externship a fantastic experience.

What was the best skill or knowledge gained? The experience of researching bills, speaking with legislators, and watching the legislative process was invaluable. I truly appreciated the opportunity to be a part of the legislative process and was able to work on interesting legal and constitutional questions. The externship honed my research, writing, and critical thinking skills while at the same time allowed for creative problem-solving. I would definitely recommend it to anyone, even if they're not particularly interested in politics. The Legislature is where laws are made and, as attorneys who interpret those laws, it's extremely helpful to understand the behind-the-scenes crafting of a bill.

JENNIFER LONDOÑO

Year of Legislative Legal Internship: Spring 2014 (51st Leg., 2nd Reg. and Special Sessions)

Brief work history and current employer: After the internship, I participated in ASU's Work-Life Law and Policy Clinic for two semesters representing unemployment insurance applicants and working with national non-profit organizations on work-life related policy matters. I'm currently serving a two-year judicial clerkship with the Honorable Randall M. Howe on the Arizona Court of Appeals.

Favorite memory: I loved that at the House I wasn't treated as "just an intern." The supervisors welcomed me as part of the staff immediately, relied on me to take charge on certain bills, invited me in on meetings, and respected my analyses and opinions. The Members were also welcoming and valued the contributions I got to make.

What was the best skill or knowledge gained? Although the Legislature is a uniquely conducive environment for learning how to work thoroughly at a fast pace and adapt to new plans on the spot, the best skill I gained from the externship was how to communicate with a new audience: the Legislature. Speaking with a Member about a bill meant having to understand the political perspective as well as the legal one and preparing for questions accordingly. I also knew that I needed to frame my analyses in ways simple enough for Members to understand should they have to pass on that explanation to a constituent. Additionally, suggesting to a drafter that his or her bill potentially may have legal deficiencies in its construction or could have difficulties in the courts is not something they want to hear, so I learned how to clearly explain why case law did not support the bill's specific approach but also have alternative options to accomplish the same goal. But like all client counseling, communication is not just about communicating to others, but being communicated to. Through many meetings I was fortunate enough to sit through, the internship reinforced my active listening skills and my understanding that at the end of the day the choice of how to proceed belonged to the Members as the elected officials, and we had to do what we could in our capacity to help them achieve their goals. Even though I'm no longer speaking to legislators, I find that I still used these skills in communicating with Clinic clients and even now in working at the Court on legal issues.

MATTHEW MOOSBRUGGER

Year of Legislative Legal Externship: I participated in the Arizona House of Representatives legal externship program in the Spring of 2016.

Brief work history and current employer: My work history involves a legislative internship in the Arizona Senate, an externship in the Arizona Attorney General's Civil Rights Division, and the legal externship in the Arizona House of Representatives for the Majority Staff General Counsel.

Favorite Memory: My favorite memory was getting to work closely with legislators and attend meetings that would ultimately shape the way legislation read as proposed or enacted.

What was the best skill or knowledge gained? I gained a lot of experience that helped me expand my legal writing and analysis abilities. The feedback I received on my work product was invaluable in helping me become better at legal analysis, especially as it relates to legislative issues.