

Weekly Report 10

10/22 - 10/28

Visiting Court

This week brought many new experiences and helped expand my knowledge in regards to criminal law. During the beginning of the week, an interview was set up with Judge Hoffman in Dallas who was able to speak about her experience as a lawyer and a judge. Being a judge gave her a unique perspective on the legal system and many of the programs she started were inspiring to hear about. While the interview was incredibly informative, one of the best parts of the meeting with Judge Hoffman was getting to watch a capital murder trial after the interview. Having done Mock Trial in the past exposed me to the majority of trial work, but this trial was my first opportunity to watch a real life trial. Watching the prosecuting attorney attempt to incriminate the defendant was riveting and seeing a picture of the victim next to the witness stand made the trial feel much more real.

My goal for this week was to gain more knowledge specifically about criminal law rather than about law in general. This goal was accomplished through visiting the courthouse because it provided insight into the different processes involved in trial work. Watching a trial, a judge make a ruling on a case, and visiting a temporary jail cell for convicted criminals were all imperative to understanding the basics involved with criminal court. In addition, Judge Hoffman had lots of knowledge to offer on the different kinds of criminal law from prosecution to defense to misdemeanor and felony court. Talking to Judge Hoffman also solidified my knowledge that it is important to try out different types of law before deciding on a specific topic.

After coming up with an idea for original work, some of this week was also dedicated to picking out topics that would be suitable for the legal journal. Picking a topic to write about was more difficult than expected because it required in depth research on multiple topics before connecting different ideas and writing about the legal implications. It was frustrating to do extensive research to only realize that there was not a legal question to answer or figure out. Continuing this research requires persistence and becoming better at connecting ideas that would not typically be related. For this upcoming week, the main goal is to create long term, tangible goals for me to focus on along the way. It is important to establish checkpoints that keep me accountable for doing work and make sure progress continues on interviews and my original work.