

Grade 11 Practicum

For my practicum, I shadowed two different lawyers. Finding a mentor was fairly easy for me as I knew what field I wanted to shadow in and I already knew both of my mentors. For the first two days of my practicum, I shadowed Lisa Sterling Arnquist. She is a family lawyer with her own firm based in Santa Ana and she is also a former Waldorf parent. The third day of my practicum I shadowed George Turner, who is a district attorney and another former Waldorf parent. A district attorney is meant to protect the general public and they are the prosecutors in trials.

We went to Superior Court of California of the County of Orange to observe hearings. I had already been interested in the field of law, although I had not had any experience so this was a perfect opportunity for me to explore this career. There are many different branches of law and I did not know which branches of law I may be interested in, so I was very happy that I was able to find two mentors in two different fields of law. Although it is difficult to name one favorite part of my experience, I really enjoyed an opportunity I had to interview a judge at the courthouse on my third day; he also let me stay and observe what they do before a sentencing in the judge's chambers. It was very interesting to watch each of the trials as well. I received a lot of advice from both my mentors about their careers, their education to get where they are now, and what I can do as a high school student to prepare for a career in the legal field.

The most challenging part of this experience was the first task my mentor Lisa asked me to do. She had me make a phone call to another company and ask the representative on the other end a whole list of questions in order to get the proper paperwork for one of Lisa's clients. This took me way out of my comfort zone, as I was representing her firm so if I made a mistake not only would I have to call back and ask more questions. I would also have made her firm look unprofessional.

This career shadowing experience definitely made me want to be a lawyer much more so than I had wanted to beforehand. I got to see both sides of this career: the paperwork and preparation as well as the court side. I interviewed many different district attorneys at the courthouse and I asked them where they see themselves in 10 years. Each one of them they loved their jobs and they hoped to be working in the same job they are now. I received so much advice by asking many questions which all helped confirm this career as one I would like to pursue.

- Isabel Dumaine, Grade 11