

My Summer Associate Experience: Michael Kaney

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Our 2017 [Summer Clerkship Program](#) brought four law students for an intellectually challenging and professionally gratifying experience. Nearing the end of the program, the students agreed to share a few of the highlights about their summer.

Michael joined us from Florida State University's College of Law, where he is a member of the Law Review, President of Moot Court, and was appointed as an Associate Justice of the FSU Supreme Court. He previously clerked at a full service firm in Tallahassee and an insurance defense firm in Orlando. He is expected to graduate in 2018.

Here is what Michael had to say about his summer at Shutts.

Q1. Describe a typical day on the job.

The days varied, but usually the first thing I'd do is grab my coffee, check my e-mails and make my to-do list for the day. For a day in the office, I'd get an early start on any work I needed to complete which usually consisted of drafting motions, legal research, reviewing pleadings, and even prepping an attorney for a deposition. Throughout the day I'd speak with the attorneys regarding cases I was working on and receive any feedback or advice they'd have to offer. I'd usually go to lunch with some of the attorneys and sometimes on afternoon coffee runs. I was fortunate to have a great mentor, Nicole Ballante, who was always around to talk or answer any questions I had on a day-to-day basis.

Q2. What advice would you give to someone looking for a summer clerkship? What should they do to succeed in the position?

First, focus on your grades and academics. The market is competitive and you're competing for jobs against a pool of highly qualified individuals. Being sure to take care of business in the classroom is a great first step. After that, if you know which city you'd like to practice in, focus on reaching out to firms in that market. It's a long and tough process, so patience is definitely important. As for the interviews - I'd suggest just be yourself. Be sure to engage in conversation with those interviewing you; take the time to look up their background.

During your clerkship be sure to reach out to attorneys and make relationships. A good portion of my work this summer came from attorneys I got to know fairly well early on, and they continued to feed me work throughout the summer. There's definitely a learning curve, but pay attention to detail and make sure your work product is the best it can be. You may feel a need to rush through projects quickly, but I think it is better to make sure your work is high quality over anything else.

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Q3. What knowledge and/or skills will you be taking with you after completing the program?

My writing has improved greatly. In addition, my ability to work through a case and understand the nuances and intricacies of every little detail in a case has improved as well. My work this summer focused primarily on construction and commercial litigation. I gained invaluable knowledge not only with the law, but also with the specific areas of practice that I'll be going into when I graduate. Also, importantly, I learned a good deal about client relationships. The attorneys gave me the ability to meet and discuss cases with clients directly, which I found to be greatly beneficial to my development.

Q4. What were your expectations and have they been met (or exceeded)?

I expected the opportunity to work hard and learn a lot this summer. I knew it would be tough, but Shutts does a great job of creating a work life balance for their attorneys and Summer Associates. The attorneys were always willing to answer any questions and really took the time to get to know you, which I appreciated. It's apparent that Shutts cares about building relationships on top of putting out excellent work product. It was a phenomenal summer, and I would highly recommend Shutts to any law students interested in working in a big firm.

About Shutts & Bowen LLP

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