

LEGAL RESUME WRITING

Career Skills Handout Series

CAREER DEVELOPMENT OFFICE [CDO] ASSISTANCE

Be sure to have your resume reviewed by a career advisor. We recommend that for an initial review you meet in person with an advisor. If you prefer, you may drop your cover letter off in hard-copy, fax it to (916) 739-7260, or email it to lawcareers@pacific.edu. Of the latter three options, we prefer email and that you send resumes to us as Word documents—rather than PDFs—so advisors can review them electronically with the Track Changes tool. We make every effort to return documents within forty-eight hours. When emailing resumes and cover letters to employers, make them PDF documents, so they will not get garbled in transmission. **Before having your resume reviewed, please read this handout and take at least a first stab at transforming your undergraduate or previous professional resume into a *legal* resume.**

YOUR LEGAL RESUME: THE BIG PICTURE

Before you get into the nuts and bolts of drafting a resume for legal employers, keep in mind these foundational principles:

Before writing your first draft, put yourself in the place of a legal employer and decide what you would look for in a new law clerk or lawyer. The person who reads your resume is thinking, “What’s in it for me?” Your resume is your professional advertisement; if you want readers to buy what you’re selling, you must speak their language.

Think about the transferable skills you have that will appeal to a legal employer. How do you do this? Inventory your background and accomplishments, and list everything that distinguishes you as a job seeker. Next, select only the information that is *relevant* to legal employers you’re interested in.

A resume is not an autobiography or timeline; it is a summary of your academic and professional credentials. As a general rule, you should eliminate from your resume anything that will not contribute to getting an interview.

There’s no such thing as a one-size-fits-all resume. If you will be approaching employers in various types of practices, it is a good idea to have multiple resumes, each marketing your experience and skills for a particular practice area and setting. For example, if you are sending a resume to a public interest employer and want to demonstrate a commitment to the public sector,

you might want to have a version that includes more detail about your community service and volunteer activities. On a resume sent to a firm with a business and commercial practice, you might emphasize the high grades you received in business law courses.

Everything you include in your resume can either help you or hurt you. For example, a Sacramento address may help you with a local employer but hurt you with a San Diego employer. Involvement in the Federalist Society or the American Constitution Society may win over some employers but turn off others. One of the keys to drafting an effective resume is knowing your audience.

Your resume is a work product; along with your cover letter, it's your first writing sample for the employer. As such, it must be scrupulously honest, concise, positive, and absolutely free of typographical, grammatical, and spelling errors. Also, because law is a conservative field, the format of your resume should be conventional.

Your life summed up in thirty seconds. Resumes are not read like poetry, slowly in one's perfect leisure. Resumes are read hastily. Craft your resume so that the high points can be absorbed within thirty seconds.

FORMAT AND STYLE

Legal employers expect to see a traditional reverse-chronological resume. Many word processing software programs feature resume templates with graphics, stylistic devices, and headings for personal information, summary of qualifications, and an objective. These templates are not appropriate for a legal resume; don't make the mistake of thinking that because it's a word processing template it must be appropriate for the legal profession.

Follow these general rules:

1. Organize your information clearly.
2. Be concise.
3. Be internally consistent.
4. *Proofread. Proofread again. Proofread one more time.*

Follow these guidelines as you begin to draft your resume:

Paper: Give your resume a professional appearance. It should be word processed and printed on a quality printer. Use white or off-white heavy bond paper that bears a watermark or linen grain. While you may prefer grey paper, it does not photocopy well, and your resume will likely be photocopied for interviewers.

Font Style: Use a standard serif font, such as Times New Roman or Garamond. Your font should be the same throughout the resume.

Font Size: In general, you should not use a point size smaller than 10.5, and 12 is optimal, unless you need smaller than 12-point font in order to stay on one page. If your resume is well crafted, it is better to allow it to go onto a second page than it is to reduce your font size below 10.5. Your name should be two to four points larger

than your text and may be entered in all capital letters. If you bold and capitalize your name, don't underline it—two font attributes for emphasis are sufficient.

Margins: Your resume should look attractive on the page. Keep margins large enough to avoid a crowded and cluttered appearance. Typically top and bottom margins on a resume are one inch, and left-side and right-side margins should be one inch if you can do it and stay on one page, otherwise you can reduce margins to as little as one-half inch.

Style: Follow the conventions for legal resumes described in this handout. When you have equally correct alternatives to choose between, choose one alternative and apply it consistently throughout your resume.

Language: Use short descriptive phrases with strong action verbs to relate job accomplishments. Start your bullets with action verbs—see a list at the back of this handout. Because bullets are complete sentences—with the subject understood to be “I”—put periods at the end. Refrain from using self-promoting adjectives; instead use descriptive but objective statements to showcase the work you did and the skills you acquired. Include key words and phrases that readers may look for, for example, “complex litigation,” “defended depositions.” Be positive. Your resume should convey enthusiasm and confidence.

Abbreviations: Because a resume is a formal document, avoid most abbreviations. You can abbreviate the states in which you worked, your degrees (e.g., “J.D.” and “B.A.”) and familiar acronyms, such as “GPA.”

TIP:
Be consistent! If you use the abbreviation “J.D.,” then use the abbreviation “B.A.” If you write out “Juris Doctor,” then write out “Bachelor of Arts.”

LENGTH OF A LEGAL RESUME

Most law students will be able to fit all of their relevant information on one page. However, there is no hard-and-fast rule against using a two-page resume. Several factors could justify using a two-page resume: (1) you are preparing a public interest resume and have a great deal of community service you want to include; (2) you have a technical background (e.g., engineering, biology) and are concentrating in intellectual property law; (3) you have a substantial previous career (a few years or more); (4) you would have to eliminate information *that an employer would consider relevant* to the position you are seeking.

If your resume is two pages, do not feel pressure to fill the second page; the second page should be as concise as the first. Don't repeat your full heading on the second page, but do include a header with your name, the word “Resume,” and “Page 2 of 2” at the top left or centered on the second page. Do not

TIP:
The length of a given entry on your resume should be roughly proportional to the importance of that entry to the employer you are giving your resume to. With respect to your education, the space you allocate to your undergraduate school should not dwarf the space you allocate to McGeorge. With respect to your work experience, allocate more space (bullets) to more complex and responsible positions—generally, your most recent—than to earlier, especially entry-level, positions.

include “Page 1” on the first page. Significant gaps on your resume will concern some employers. Speak with your career advisor about how to address them.

BASIC OUTLINE

Resume conventions differ from one profession to another. The following outline shows the preferred content and order of presentation for law students and graduates who are seeking law clerk or attorney positions. Note that for experienced attorneys preparing resumes for lateral moves, legal experience becomes the prime credential for prospective employers. Thus, experienced attorneys should put the EXPERIENCE section before the EDUCATION section.

Headings

Headings can be formatted in a variety of ways. To save space, consider a heading such as that shown on pages 16 and 24. To make use of otherwise blank space on the page, consider a heading such as that shown on pages 17, 19, 20, and 21. **Think of your heading as your letterhead. The heading on your resume can also be used as letterhead on your cover letters, reference lists, and cover sheets for writing samples.**

Name: Generally, use your full name, including your middle initial or, if you prefer, your entire middle name. If you go by your middle name, include your first initial before your middle name, or put your middle name in quotation marks. If you go by a nickname that you want the interviewer to call you, put it in quotation marks after your first name, for example, Howard “Chip” Smith. Add “Mr.” or “Ms.” in front of your name if it is not otherwise clear how to address you (for example, “Ms. Robin Jones”).

Address: If you are seeking a job in the geographic area of your permanent address or feel that listing a permanent address in addition to your current address would be otherwise useful, do so.

Telephone: Enter a maximum of two phone numbers; one is usually sufficient. Including a cellular telephone number is a personal choice, but consider these factors. Do you take your cell phone with you everywhere you go? Would you be comfortable with an employer calling your cell phone to ask questions or to schedule an interview while you’re driving, at a noisy restaurant, or in the supermarket? Imagine some worst case scenarios (bad reception or low battery).

Email Address: Include your email address. Be sure to use a professional email address (not, for example, lovetheladies@hotmail.com). Your Pacific account is ideal for this purpose. You can link your Pacific account to another email account. On printed (as opposed to electronic) copies of your resume, you don’t want your email address to be a hyperlink—blue and underlined.

Personal Information:

Do not include items such as a photograph, birth date, marital status, children, or health status. Some employers look askance at your providing information concerning issues about which they may not lawfully inquire.

OBJECTIVE, SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS, and SKILLS

Although in some professions Objectives, Summary of Qualifications, and Skills are considered appropriate categories for resumes, they simply are *not* used on legal resumes. If your resume currently has Objective, Summary of Qualifications, or Skills sections, use that information in your cover letter, which is the appropriate place to address your career objective, interest in a specific practice area, and special skills. Employers will take it as a given that you have basic computer-assisted legal research skills.

EDUCATION

Enter, in reverse-chronological order, the schools of higher education you have attended. The University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law should be the first entry. Include the city and state in which your school is located. If your school's name includes the geographic location (e.g., "University of California, Los Angeles"), you do not need to repeat the location, unless you want to, for formatting consistency. If you do repeat the city and state, you should justify them on the right margin—in which case, for internal consistency, you should right justify the cities and states of the other schools on your resume—so as to avoid the appearance of inconsistency. You need not list a law school or college from which you did not earn a degree, unless it will assist you by, for example, showing your connection to a particular geographic area. You need not list community colleges from which you received a degree, unless it will assist you by, for example, establishing geographic ties or that you undertook a law-related course of study.

- Enter the degree you are currently pursuing (J.D. or Juris Doctor—not *Doctorate*) and your expected date of graduation. For degrees already earned, include the school name and location, degree(s) received and date(s) conferred, major and minor areas of study, and cumulative GPA, if 3.0 or above.
- Your class rank is a selling point if you are near the top of your class. You should include it if you are in the top half of your class. If you are not in the top half, do not include it. If an applicant does not include class rank on a resume, most employers will assume that the applicant is in the bottom half of the class. Round down to the next whole number (not up to the *nearest* whole number). In addition, you should include the fraction from which your percentage is derived (e.g., 30/204).

TIP:

Law students and recent law school graduates should enter the EDUCATION section before the EXPERIENCE section. Once graduates land entry-level, career-track positions, whether JD-required or nonlegal career positions, their experience becomes the more salient credential. Hence, for practicing lawyers or JDs pursuing nontraditional careers, the EXPERIENCE section should come before the EDUCATION section.

- If you are including your McGeorge class rank and want also to enter your GPA, enter your class rank first, since rankings can be compared across schools, whereas McGeorge GPAs may tend to skew lower than GPAs from competitor law schools. GPA is abbreviated “GPA” not “G.P.A.” A class rank/GPA line should read as follows: Class Rank: Top 27% (67/256); GPA: 3.05. You must enter your GPA exactly as it is on your transcript or round it down to the hundredth place, *not* to the nearest whole number. Omit your undergraduate GPA unless it is stellar.
- You need not capitalize “cum laude,” “magna cum laude,” or “summa cum laude.” Although one school of thought is that they are foreign terms and hence italicized, the better view is that they are now common terms in English that don’t require capitalization (think, for example, “et al.” and “de novo”).
- If your cumulative GPA is not outstanding, but you received excellent grades in some courses that are relevant to the employers who will read your resume, enter them, along with your grade in each, under the subheading, “relevant course work.” Do not enter courses that do not relate to your targeted employer’s practice areas. If your grades show a marked upward trend, show that trend (e.g., Fall 2008 GPA: 3.00; Spring 2009 GPA: 3.60).
- If you use a subheading to introduce your law review or journal work, be precise. Make sure to refer to the correct name of the journal and italicize it. To properly cite to your law review experience, use the following format: Legislative Staff Writer, *McGeorge Law Review*, 2009–2010.
- If you are including the name of your law review or journal note or comment, use *Bluebook* rule 16.6.2. Notice the use of the large and small capital letters and the abbreviations used in the title of the review or journal. For example: Note, *The Death of a Lawyer*, 56 COLUM. L. REV. 606 (1956).
- If your document is forthcoming, follow *Bluebook* rule 17.2 as well. For example: Comment, *The Birth of a Lawyer*, 83 COLUM. L. REV. 201 (forthcoming June 201x).
- If you are including the name of an unpublished manuscript, follow *Bluebook* rule 17.1. Notice that titles of unpublished manuscripts are not italicized. For example: Analysis of California’s Welfare Reform Act, SB 245 (2009) (on file with author).
- If you have published articles that are not law-related, list them in a separate PUBLICATIONS section after EXPERIENCE. Do not include an extensive list of publications, if they are not related to law. Rather, make a summary statement about the articles you have published. If you have a technical background (e.g., engineering, biology) and seek an intellectual property position, you may include a more extensive publications section toward the bottom of your resume.

- For any publication that you enter, be prepared to provide a copy for an employer to read; also be prepared to discuss it in an interview.

- Enter honors and activities under the school or other institution at which they were achieved, rather than under a separate ACTIVITIES or AWARDS heading. If you have numerous honors and activities to list, use subheadings, such as *Honors*, *Activities*, and *Law Journal*. When using subheadings, there should always be at least two; if you are contemplating only one subheading, the content would be better suited to bullet points, which would fall directly under your McGeorge heading. Include academic honors, such as Dean's List, scholarships, Witkin awards, law review, law journal, and moot court. If you were awarded a substantial scholarship, include an explanatory parenthetical, e.g., "Barrister's Scholarship (25 percent of annual tuition)."

TIP:

List extracurricular activities if you had a leadership position, or if you were an active member. Do not include organizations in which you are/were so inactive that if an interviewer were to ask you about your involvement you would find it awkward to answer. Always list the full name of student organizations (e.g., Student Bar Association, not SBA) and the offices you held. You need not specify that you are/were a member of the organization. The fact you entered the name of the organization indicates you are/were a member.

- When citing to a study abroad experience and deciding how much attention you will give it, think about how relevant the experience will be to your potential employers. Enter it under a *Study Abroad* or *Relevant Coursework* subheading (if indeed it is relevant to the job to which you are applying) or under the main McGeorge heading. There are three common formats:

Study Abroad: Fundamental Rights in Europe and the United States, under Associate Justice Anthony M. Kennedy in Salzburg, Austria, July 2010.

Relevant Coursework: Fundamental Rights in Europe and the United States, under Associate Justice Anthony Kennedy in Salzburg, Austria, July 2010.

- Studied Fundamental Rights in Europe and the United States, under Associate Justice Anthony M. Kennedy in Salzburg, Austria, July 2010.

- Enter the assets that are your greatest selling points, but do not overload your resume. If you have extensive honors and activities, enter only a representative sample or choose only the most relevant ones. Activities and honors in law school will impress prospective employers more than those in undergraduate school. If a school activity is not relevant to the practice of law, does not demonstrate an ability to handle responsibility, or does not indicate strong interpersonal skills that will be useful in obtaining clients, consider omitting it; however, space permitting, it is fine to enter an activity simply for its value as an interesting ice breaker.

EXPERIENCE

Typically legal and non-legal positions can be listed together, in reverse-chronological order, under a heading entitled EXPERIENCE. In the event that your legal experience is not your most recent experience, it can be helpful to use two categories: LEGAL EXPERIENCE followed by OTHER EXPERIENCE, using reverse-chronological order within each section. This will draw the reader's attention first to your legal experience, despite the fact that it is not your most recent experience.

- When entering dates of employment, generally it is preferable to spell out the months or seasons and use four digits to represent the years of your employment. It is fine to abbreviate (consistently) in the interest of keeping your resume to one page.
- For each entry, on the first line, enter the name and location of your employer. On the second line, include your job title and dates of employment. Do not enter dates or locations on the left side of the page. Either move them to the right margin or enter them, separated by commas, after the institutions to which they apply.
- Your resume need not be a complete job history. The date you graduated from college is an important milestone. Generally, jobs you had before graduating from college need not be on your resume. There are three important exceptions: (1) Enter college jobs that are law-related (e.g., legal secretary, paralegal). If you want to establish that you worked your way through college, under your undergraduate institution, enter "Held various part-time and summer positions to finance education, 2009–2011." (2) Enter jobs that establish relevant geographic ties not otherwise apparent on your resume. (3) If you had a previous *career*—as opposed to "college jobs"—enter positions that constitute that career. When entering positions from a pre-law-school career, keep your bullets to a minimum. Employers are not as interested in what you did in your previous career as you think they should be.
- On resumes, hyphens are commonly used to create compound adjectives, such as "first-year students." Hyphens are also used to separate non-inclusive numbers, such as Social Security numbers and phone numbers. En dashes—not hyphens—are used to separate numbers that are inclusive, such as dates on a resume (e.g., 2002–2005) and page numbers (e.g., pp. 25–31). The en dash is slightly longer than the hyphen.

TIP:

You may enter volunteer work under EXPERIENCE, if you developed an important skill set that is transferable to the practice of law. Otherwise, include volunteer work in a COMMUNITY SERVICE or PERSONAL INTERESTS section.

TIP:

Don't confuse the "en dash" with the "em dash," which is commonly called simply a dash. The em dash is longer and is used to create a break or indicate a strong emphasis in a sentence. The em dash can be used in pairs—to set off a word or phrase—or alone—to emphasize a closing phrase. When using a hyphen, en dash, em dash, or slash, do not put spaces on either side of it.

- CDO recommends bullet points instead of paragraph-style descriptions, because readers can absorb bullets more quickly. Keep the bullet-point descriptions short. Wrap around onto a second line, if you must, but wrapping onto three lines defeats the purpose of using bullets. Microsoft Word will format your bullet points correctly, if you use the bullet-point options in the drop-down menu under the “Home” tab.

TIP:

Here are examples of concrete accomplishments:

- “Increased sales by ten percent after only six months on the job.”
- “Received the Employee of the Year award for 2008.”

Don’t cite vague or unsupported accomplishments like, “Provided excellent customer service.”

- Paragraph-style descriptions can be a useful space-saving alternative to bullet points. They are effective to the extent they are concise and easy to read.

- Do not begin your descriptions with the phrases “responsibilities included” or “duties included.” Instead, jump into action by using action verbs: “Drafted summary judgment and other motions.”

- Use present tense action verbs to describe your current job and past tense action verbs to describe former positions.

TIP:

There’s no need to cite your WESTLAW or LEXIS-NEXIS skills, unless you have advanced certification.

- Avoid jargon, abbreviations, and insider descriptions that a legal employer may not understand.

- When entering legal employers, if the name does not indicate the kind of practice area (e.g., “American Immigration Law Office”), refer to the firms’ practice areas in the first bullet (e.g., “Drafted pre-trial motions for a 12-attorney insurance defense firm.”) Next, briefly summarize your job duties and concrete accomplishments. Focus on the job duties that show the most law-related skills; you do not need to include every duty of every job.

- Emphasize responsibilities that show **problem-solving ability**. Highlight skills that will interest a legal employer, such as attention to detail, meeting deadlines, research and writing, and working under pressure.

- Be concise, but elaborate on *skills* that you have developed that will be useful in the field of law. **Tasks may or may not translate from one career to another, but certain skills will always transfer.**

- Provide specific information about your responsibilities and achievements; quantify where possible, for example, the size of caseload handled, the size of a budget, percentage increase in revenues, and number of employees supervised. When applying for prosecution or criminal defense positions, if you have relevant experience (as a certified law student, for example), it can be a tremendous advantage to quantify your experience. Criminal law employers prefer candidates with proven trial skills. When you have substantial courtroom experience including trying bench or jury trials, arguing

motions, preliminary hearings, probation revocations, and the like, quantify that experience.

- Capitalize every proper noun (the official name of a particular person, place, or thing) but do *not* capitalize common nouns (a class of things or one or more things within that class). Common nouns are considered general terms of classification and are often modified by indefinite words such as *a, any, every, or some*.

Examples:

Proper Noun

“Researched the Clayton Antitrust Act.”

“Conducted research for Professor John C. Sims.”

Common Noun

“Researched antitrust acts.”

“Worked on professor’s article...”

BAR ADMISSION

Below are examples of how to enter your state bar status once you have taken the bar exam. Place the entry immediately below your name and address header.

If you have taken a bar exam but results have yet to be announced:

Awaiting results of the July 2011 California bar examination.

If you passed the bar exam, but are awaiting approval of moral character:

BAR ADMISSION

Passed July 2011 California bar examination.

If you passed the bar exam and are approved to be sworn in:

BAR ADMISSION

Passed July 2011 California bar examination. To be sworn in on December 2, 2011.

If you’ve been sworn in and are awaiting your bar number:

BAR ADMISSION

State Bar of California, December 2011.

If you have your bar number:

BAR ADMISSION

State Bar of California, Member No. 012345

Alternatively, if you want to enter several bar association memberships, as the last heading before LANGUAGE SKILLS and PERSONAL INTERESTS sections, you can use a MEMBERSHIPS or PERSONAL ASSOCIATIONS section:

MEMBERSHIPS

State Bar of California, Member No. 012345
American Bar Association
Sacramento County Bar Association
Barrister's Club
[Other, e.g., affinity bar organizations]

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

If you are a member of bar associations or other professional organizations, such as the American Bar Association, the Sacramento County Bar Association, or affinity bar associations, you may include the affiliations on your resume.

- If you are still a student, you may include professional memberships in an *Activities* subheading under McGeorge, even though they may not be directly associated with the law school.
- If you have passed the bar and have yet to have a job title that indicates you are an attorney, you *should* include a separate BAR ADMISSIONS, MEMBERSHIPS, or PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS section on your resume. You may include such a section, even if you have an attorney job title (e.g., associate, staff attorney, deputy public defender). In that section, you may enter all bar memberships, and other professional associations and memberships, including the dates of your membership in each organization. Specify offices you hold or have held, but you need not describe yourself as a “member” of the organization; the fact you entered the name of the association indicates you are or, for the dates indicated, were a member.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Volunteer work and participation in community activities can be important to legal employers, especially when applying for public interest work. If the nature of your volunteer/community service work does not lend itself to your EXPERIENCE section, but is substantial *and current*—volunteer activities quickly lose their salience as credentials—consider adding a COMMUNITY SERVICE or COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES section, if your activities would be relevant to employers to which you will be giving your resume.

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Foreign language proficiency can be directly relevant to an employer's needs, such as an employer with an international law practice or a direct-services agency that serves an immigrant population. Language facility also may be worth noting as a potential topic for conversation. Be sure to include your skill level—e.g., conversational, fluent, or native speaker—for example, “Speak Spanish fluently. Proficient in reading and writing in Spanish.” If you are unsure whether you have sufficient proficiency to enter on your resume, consider whether your skills are sufficient to help the employer in the business setting—for example, could you translate for clients? Err on the side of describing yourself as less, rather than more, proficient. When you

note on your resume that you have a language proficiency, you are inviting the interviewer to speak to you in that language. LANGUAGE SKILLS sections should be last—or if you have a PERSONAL INTERESTS section—second-to-last.

PERSONAL INTERESTS

Personal interests are worth including on resumes because they can (1) provide an ice breaker for interviews, (2) help establish a rapport based on shared interests, and (3) communicate that you are an interesting and well-rounded person. Many legal employers indicate that a large part of their interviewing is focused on identifying whether or not the candidate will be a good “fit” with the organization. Include items that tell the employer something about you (e.g., scuba diving, coin collecting). Be specific rather than general. Instead of saying, “Enjoy sports, music, and reading,” say “Enjoy playing golf, attending symphony concerts, and reading classic literature.”

TIP:
When you include a PERSONAL INTERESTS section, make it the last section on your resume. PERSONAL INTERESTS sections are expendable and should not be the only reason to go onto a second page.

- You can use this heading to include things that will make your resume stand out from all others. Even if they are not directly relevant to working in a legal position, you may have special qualifications or interests that you want to bring to an employer’s attention.
- Three or four interests are sufficient—if you have more than that, strategically pick the ones to include on your resume. For example, rather than entering strictly outdoor physical activities, include both physical and more cerebral/cultural activities, e.g., “Kayaking, mountain biking, playing the piano, and reading political biographies.” Consider including interests that implicate your ability to bring in business (e.g., golf, tennis, participation in National Association of Contractors).
- Some employers become unsettled when you volunteer information about areas into which they cannot lawfully inquire, so the better practice is not to refer to your family in describing your interests.

REFERENCES

Do not use the phrase “References Available Upon Request” on your resume. It is understood you will submit references if requested.

- Do not list references on your resume. Create a separate sheet for references. At the top of your reference list, use the same “letterhead” you used as a header on your resume. Center the word “REFERENCES” in all capital letters below your letterhead. Include the name, title, affiliation, address, phone number, and email address of each reference. The best practice is to enter below your email address a short descriptor of how the reference knows you, for example, “Immediate supervisor,” “First-year research and writing professor,” “Moot court competition team coach.” Unless an employer requests references, you need not submit your references list when making initial contact with an employer.

- Always ask an individual's permission to list him or her as a reference. Legal employers want professional references, not personal references. Judges and lawyers who can vouch for your legal work, and law professors who can speak about your skills, can be strong references. Although in your first year or two of law school you may need to resort to undergraduate faculty members and non-legal employers, as soon as possible, transition to lawyers as references.

SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS

When deciding by what method to submit your application, here is rule number one: Follow the employer's directions. When the employer does not direct you, you have a choice between email and United States Postal Service mail. When using email, convert your resume and cover letter to PDF documents, then send them as attachments to a transmittal email. In that transmittal, note your current status (e.g., law student, law school graduate, associate), the position(s) you are interested in, and that you have attached your cover letter and resume. If not otherwise directed by the employer, it is appropriate to mail paper copies of resumes to employers. If you resort to an express carrier, such as Federal Express or UPS, do not select a method that requires the recipient to sign for your envelope.

ACTION VERBS

Accelerated	conducted	found	programmed
Accomplished	constructed	gathered	projected
Achieved	conserved	guided	promoted
Acquired	consolidated	handled	proposed
Adjusted	consulted	heightened	prosecuted
administered	contracted	highlighted	provided
advised	controlled	identified	purchased
aided	coordinated	implemented	received
analyzed	corresponded	improved	recommended
applied	counseled	initiated	recorded
appointed	created	inspected	referred
appraised	critiqued	instructed	reported
arbitrated	debated	instituted	represented
argued	decided	interpreted	required
arranged	defined	interrogated	researched
assembled	delegated	interviewed	resolved
assessed	delivered	invented	reviewed
assigned	demonstrated	investigated	scheduled
assisted	designed	launched	selected
assumed	determined	lectured	served
audited	developed	licensed	solved
authored	devised	located	specialized
authorized	directed	maintained	streamlined
awarded	discovered	managed	strengthened
began	dispensed	maximized	studied
bolstered	documented	modified	suggested
boosted	drafted	monitored	summarized
briefed	edited	motivated	supervised
budgeted	enlisted	negotiated	supplied
calculated	ensured	observed	supported
catalogued	established	obtained	surveyed
chaired	estimated	operated	targeted
charted	evaluated	organized	taught
checked	examined	participated	tracked
classified	executed	performed	trained
closed	expanded	persuaded	transformed
collected	expedited	planned	translated
combined	facilitated	prepared	traveled
commented	familiarized	prescribed	uncovered
compared	filed	presented	updated
compiled	forecast	processed	welcomed
completed	formulated	procured	worked
composed	fostered	produced	wrote

SAMPLE LAW STUDENT RESUMES

REBECCA “ANN” JONES

18 Harlor Lane, Apartment A, Sacramento, CA 95819 ■ (917) 444-8401 ■ annjones@yahoo.com

EDUCATION

University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law

Sacramento, California

Candidate for Juris Doctor and Government Affairs Certificate, May 2011

Class Rank: Top 25% (75/300)

Law Review: Comment Editor, *McGeorge Law Review*, 2010–2011
Legislative Staff Writer, *McGeorge Law Review*, 2008–2009
Note, *Toxic Substances: A Toxic Subject*, MCGEORGE L. REV. (forthcoming, May 2011)
Analysis of the California Wiretap Act, (2009) (unpublished bill analysis, McGeorge School of Law) (on file with author)

Honors: Witkin Award for highest grade in Torts
Dean’s List, 2009 and 2010
James Foundation Scholarship (30% of annual tuition)

Activities: Alternative Dispute Resolution Forum
Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

Washington University

St. Louis, Missouri

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, Minor in Economics, June 2008

Honors: Edward Arthur Mellinger four-year merit scholarship
Dean’s List, three semesters

Activities: Psi Chi, International Honor Society in Psychology
Part-time employment to finance fifty percent of expenses

EXPERIENCE

Stone, Pogrund, Korey & Spagat

Sacramento, California
May 2010–August 2010

Law Clerk

- Researched and drafted legal memorandums in the areas of contracts and real estate in a ten-attorney business law firm.
- Performed extensive research on topics related to UCC coverage of custom-designed computer software and long-arm jurisdiction in contract disputes.
- Drafted complaints, responses, motions, and other pleadings.
- Assisted attorneys at hearings and real estate closings; attended client meetings and depositions.

Winston & Strawn

Walnut Creek, California
May 2009–August 2010

Legal Assistant–Bankruptcy and Business Reorganization Department

- Summarized and reported status of ongoing adversary proceedings in large Chapter 11 cases for an Am Law 100 corporate law firm.
- Drafted and revised legal documents; performed cite checks and WESTLAW research.
- Abstracted case depositions and hearing transcripts.
- Maintained case dockets and prepared indices of relevant documents.

Office of the Public Defender

St. Louis, Missouri
June 2008–August 2008

Legal Intern

- Investigated factual data for criminal cases.
- Summarized witness testimony after attending trials, hearings, and depositions.
- Interviewed clients daily and assessed eligibility for state assistance.

PERSONAL INTERESTS

Golf, cook Northern Italian cuisine, and participate in Big Sisters of Northern California.

SHEILA B. MURPHY

1900 44th Street
Sacramento, California 95816
(916) 451-8232
smurphy@hotmail.com

EDUCATION

University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law, Sacramento, California

J.D. Candidate, May 2013

Class Rank: Top 25% (50/200)

Second-Year GPA: 3.42; First-Year GPA: 2.97; Cumulative GPA: 3.20

- Appellate Advocacy: 12/75 overall rank in Moot Court Competition, 2007
- Studied Fundamental Rights in Europe and the United States, under Associate Justice Anthony Kennedy, Salzburg, Austria, Summer 2005
- Academic Scholarship, renewable for four years

Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

B.A. in History, cum laude, June 2006

GPA: 3.98/4.00

- President's Scholarship: four-time honoree for ranking in top 5 percent of class
- 2006 Student of the Year, History Department (selected by faculty)

LEGAL EXPERIENCE

Wright, Davis & Milligan, Sacramento, California

Law Clerk, Summer 2011

- Drafted briefs for trial and appellate practice in a 40-attorney general civil litigation firm.
- Researched, conducted interviews, and prepared clients for testimony at depositions and arbitration hearings.
- Assisted as second chair at a trial involving client's right to credit information.

Wilke, Fleury, Hoffelt, Gould & Birney, LLP, Sacramento, California

File Clerk, Fall 2006–Spring 2008

- Maintained discovery records for the five-attorney healthcare department.
- Created new document processing and filing system for litigation documents.
- Organized and closed case files.

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Stride for Ohio, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

Program Coordinator, Fall 2009–Fall 2010

- Conceived and coordinated comprehensive tutoring and mentoring program for local disadvantaged high school juniors and seniors.
- Trained 55 fellow undergraduates to work with more than 150 students.
- Received Governor's Recognition Award in only second academic year of operation.
- Maintained less than 1 percent dropout rate throughout two years of stewardship.

PERSONAL INTERESTS

- Read legal thrillers, play softball, and train companion animals.

MS. ROBIN J. JONES

4200 Lakeview Drive, Freeport, CA 95832 ▪ (916) 452-2218 ▪ rjjones@yahoo.com

EDUCATION **University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law**, Sacramento, CA
J.D. to be conferred, May 2012

University of the Pacific, Stockton, CA
B.A. in Psychology with emphasis in Organizational Behavior, May
2005

Honors: Phi Beta Kappa
National Merit Scholar
Alumni Merit Scholar

Leadership Positions:
Gamma Phi Beta Sorority—Alumni Relations Chair
Associated Student Government—Senate Admissions
Committee

EXPERIENCE **Macy's Department Store**, Sacramento, CA
Assistant Buyer, June 2006–July 2009

- Worked in handbag department with annual sales volume of \$8.5 million.
- Analyzed business reports, identified key items and trends, and determined stock deficiencies.
- Negotiated with vendors to obtain profitable relationship through payment terms, advertising co-op, and markdown allowance.
- Planned sales goals, markdown objectives, advertising strategies, and vendor assortments.

Hernon Associates, Los Angeles, CA
Interviewer, June 2005–May 2006

- Solicited and identified qualified subjects for market research in the areas of cosmetics, clothing, and pharmaceutical products.
- Conducted ten to fifteen interviews per day.

COMMUNITY SERVICE Loaves and Fishes volunteer, 2008–Present
Community soccer team player, 2006–2010

LANGUAGE SKILLS Fluent in Spanish.
Con conversationally proficient in French.

PERSONAL INTERESTS Blogging, vegetarian cooking, and practicing meditation

EVA S. RUSSO

EDUCATION

University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law Sacramento, CA
Candidate for Juris Doctor, May 2008
Class Rank: Top third of class (66/200)

McGeorge Law Review

Articles Editor, 2007–2008; Comment Editor, 2006–2007, Legislative Staff Writer, Summer 2005

- Note, *A Western States Energy Policy: An Examination of Some of the Current Issues*, 29 MCGEORGE L. REV. (forthcoming Jan. 2005).
- Analysis of California's Welfare Reform Act, SB 245 (2004) (on file with author).

Catholic University Washington, DC
Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, June 2005

George R. Wistle International Scholar Award: Selected through merit competition to spend junior year at the Sorbonne in Paris, France. All courses were conducted at the graduate level, in French.

EXPERIENCE

Phyfe & Drumm Sacramento, CA
Law Clerk, June 2007 to Present

- Drafted pleadings and discovery as sole law clerk in a five-attorney civil litigation firm.
- Handled extensive client contact, including initial interviews and preparation of clients for testimony at depositions, arbitration hearings, and trials.
- Assisted at trial, providing cross-examination points in case that was decided in client's favor.

West Jaffe Washington, DC
Law Clerk, May 2006 to August 2006

- Coauthored brief in opposition to consolidation of plaintiffs in class action suit. Drafted *amicus curiae* brief submitted to U.S. Court of Appeals.
- Researched and wrote memoranda on product liability and medical malpractice issues, as well as estate planning and probate law.

LANGUAGE SKILLS AND PERSONAL INTERESTS

- Speak French fluently.
- Traveled throughout Europe extensively and published travel memoir in local newspaper.
- Enjoy tennis and Level 5 white-water rafting.

P. MICHAEL MALONEY

pmm@juno.com

Current Address

2555 Third Avenue
Sacramento, California 95817
(916) 442-9005

Permanent Address

4205 Sunflower Court
San Jose, California 94752
(208) 448-7291

EDUCATION

University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law, Sacramento, California

J.D. candidate, May 2012

- Moot Court Competition Team Member: selected for four-member team to participate in upcoming national competition involving constitutional law issue.
- Studied Fundamental Rights in Europe and the United States under Associate Justice Anthony M. Kennedy in Salzburg, Austria, July 2009.

University of San Diego, San Diego, California

B.A. in English with minor in History, June 2009

EXPERIENCE

Civil Practice Clinic, McGeorge School of Law

Certified Law Student

Sacramento, California

August 2010 to Present

- Serve as lead counsel on four cases, including domestic violence, landlord/tenant, and consumer protection.
- Research and draft complaints and numerous memoranda.
- Negotiate with opposing counsel, make court appearances, and advocate for clients at hearings.

Judge Edwin I. Smythe

U.S. District Court, Eastern District of California

Summer Extern

Sacramento, California

May 2010 to August 2010

- Drafted bench memoranda for approximately twenty-five civil lawsuits.
- Analyzed evidence, ascertained facts, and researched applicable law.
- Assisted with pretrial conferences, settlements, and sentencing hearings.
- Regularly discussed issues with Judge Smythe and law clerks; gained insight into judicial decision making and court process; improved written and oral communications through detailed critiques.

Professor Albert E. Jones, McGeorge School of Law

Research Assistant

Sacramento, California

May 2009 to June 2009

- Analyzed legislative history and recent developments of the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1989 in support of Professor Jones's scholarship.
- Researched judicial and administrative law, congressional action, and social policy.
- Checked cites and edited Professor Jones's articles.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

- Habitat for Humanity, *Volunteer Carpenter*, Summers 2008, 2009
- Upward Bound, *Volunteer Tutor at Montgomery High School*, 2009 to present

PERSONAL INTERESTS

Enjoy reading political theory, running half-marathons, and *capoeira* (Brazilian martial art).

JAMES “CHIP” BORILLA

2900 Poppy Lane
Granite Bay, California 98742
(916) 422-8091
borilla99@juno.com

EDUCATION

University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law Sacramento, California
Juris Doctor expected, May 2013

- Studied Fundamental Rights in Europe and the United States under Associate Justice Anthony M. Kennedy in Salzburg, Austria, July 2009.

University of California, Davis Davis, California
Bachelor of Science in Finance, May 2009

Zeta Beta Tau Fraternity
Executive Board Member, 2008–2009

- Served as liaison among members, trustees, housing coordinator, and alumni.
- Received citation of merit from national fraternity for outstanding service.

Recycling Chairperson, 2007

- Implemented new recycling methods and strategies for 125 members.
- Developed strong ties with community recycling organizations.

University of London London, England
International Business, Spring 2008
GPA: 3.25/4.00

EXPERIENCE

Senator Sheila J. Kuehl Sacramento, California
Staff Assistant/Intern, Summer 2009

- Responded to constituent inquiries concerning public health and environmental issues.
- Prepared memoranda used to brief Senator Kuehl for various agency meetings.
- Drafted support letters for California non-profits in need of federal grants.

JR Katz and Associates Sacramento, California
Assistant to Director of Corporate Employees, Summer 2009

- Prepared employee benefits statements for major corporations.
- Interacted with clients on a daily basis.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

- Bret Harte Elementary School, Mentor, 2010–Present
- Hands on Sacramento, Volunteer, 2009–Present

STUART R. AMERHINE

2121 Lavender Lane, Sonoma, CA 94618 ▪ (516) 482-2800 ▪ sramerhine@earthlink.net

EDUCATION **University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law, Sacramento, CA**
J.D. expected, May 2012

American Constitution Society, 2009–present
Public Legal Services Society, 2009–present

University of California, Los Angeles
B.A. in Theater with a minor in Mathematics, June 2009

Theater Fraternity, President, 2008–2009; Member, 2005–2009
Increased membership more than 200 percent during tenure. Trained and coached local inner-city high school students in traveling play program for five to twenty-five hours per month, Previous offices held: chairperson, costume design group; co-chairperson, publicity and scheduling.

EXPERIENCE **Sacramento County District Attorney’s Office, Sacramento, CA**
Legal Intern, Consumer Fraud Unit, Summer 2011
Conducted research and drafted legal memoranda regarding California statutes and case law. Second-chaired three misdemeanor trials. Prepared and organized case files.

Legal Aid Foundation, Los Angeles, CA
Law Clerk, Summer 2010
Assisted in all aspects of wage and hour litigation, including discovery requests, mediation briefs, and pre-trial motions. Conducted intake interviews with prospective low-income clients.

Los Angeles County Family Law Facilitator, Los Angeles, CA
Clerk, summers and school breaks, 2003–2008
Assisted with intake and during workshops. Trained incoming administrative staff. Assisted in the creation of filing procedures handbook.

LANGUAGE SKILLS Conversationally proficient in Spanish.

PERSONAL INTERESTS Avid rock-climber, skier, and snowboarder (AASI Level 1 Certified).

SAMPLE POST-GRADUATE RESUMES

[Recent Graduate]

Ms. Xin Tsai

1011 Lawyer Circle • San Ramon, CA 94582 • (925) 123-4567 • xintsai@yahoo.com

BAR ADMISSION

State Bar of California, Member No. 012345

EDUCATION

University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law Sacramento, CA
Juris Doctor, December 2010

Honors: Honors at Entrance

Activities: Full-time employment to finance legal education
Orientation Committee McGeorge Student Body Association (2006–2007)

University of California, Davis Davis, CA
Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Sociology with emphasis in Law and Society, June
2004. Minor in Communications

Honors: Dean's List, three quarters

Women's Honor Society
Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society

Activities: Society of Public Interest Scholars
Haiti Support Association, Founding Member

EXPERIENCE

City of Davis Davis, CA
Education Services Program Director January 2010–Present

- Develop and implement the City's goals, standards, and objectives for educational programs for low-income residents.
- Supervise approximately ten staff members, including hiring, monitoring, training, evaluating, scheduling, and determining workloads.
- Monitor day-to-day operations of programs and events, including site visits, and ensure that programs and events have required materials and supplies.

Civil Practice Clinic, McGeorge School of Law Sacramento, CA
Certified Law Student August 2008–December 2009

- Presented weekly workshops for tenants and landlords facing issues such as security deposits, habitability, rent disputes, and the threat of eviction.
- Represented twelve clients in court and negotiated with opposing counsel.
- Researched and wrote more than a dozen memorandums in the areas of family law, consumer protection, and bankruptcy.

Law Offices of Michael M. Mullins

Woodland, CA

Legal Intern

September 2007–April 2008

- Researched and drafted memorandums on a variety of civil legal topics, including personal injury, consumer rights, and real property.
- Assisted attorneys in court during trial, including note-taking, assembling trial binders, and preparing evidence.

City of Sacramento, Office of the City Attorney

Sacramento, CA

Legal Intern

January 2007–March 2007

- Researched and wrote memorandums on issues involving constitutional, environmental, employment, tax, and zoning laws.
- Reviewed and summarized depositions in preparation for ten-day jury trial.

Stanford & McDonald, LLP

Sacramento, CA

Legal Intern

January 2006–March 2007

- Assisted with case preparation in insurance defense law firm, including creating trial binders, preparing witnesses, and organizing evidence.
- Drafted briefs in opposition to pre-trial motions.

Yolo County Court Appointed Special Advocates

Woodland, CA

Court Appointed Special Advocate

August 2002–September 2005

- Counseled and supported children throughout family court custody litigation process.
- Drafted reports to Yolo County Juvenile Court regarding children's best interests.

LANGUAGE SKILLS

- Native proficiency in Mandarin

PERSONAL INTERESTS

- Mountain biking
- Playing chess
- Cooking Middle Eastern cuisine

[Veteran Attorney]

SYDNEY JACOBSON

1234 Orchard Lane
Watsonville, California 95076

831-456-0337
Sjacobson90@gmail.com

EXPERIENCE

California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc.

Watsonville, California

Directing Attorney

July 2008–Present

- Litigate employment law cases, including fair employment, wage and hour, and health and safety claims, on behalf of low-income clients.
- Regularly teach MCLE courses on employment law to local pro bono attorneys.
- Supervise five attorneys and three paralegals in all aspects of civil litigation.
- Teach workshops on employment law to members of the community.

Legal Services of Northern California

Auburn, California

Staff Attorney

November 2003–July 2008

- Practiced civil litigation in many areas of civil law, including wage and hour, landlord/tenant, real property, unlawful termination, and special education.
- Taught workshops on foreclosure prevention, first-time home buying, landlord/tenant and fair housing law on a regular basis to members of the community.

University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law

Sacramento, California

Adjunct Professor

June 2004–August 2006

- Co-taught practical legal skills course to first-year students.

Law Offices of Bowman & Associates

Sacramento, California

Intern

March 2002–May 2002

- Researched and wrote memoranda on a variety of legal issues including ERISA preemption, labor arbitration, federal jurisdiction, federal labor law preemption, constitutional, and civil rights law.

U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California

Sacramento, California

Intern, Chambers of Morrison C. England, Jr.

September 2001–November 2001

- Researched and wrote numerous bench memoranda for civil motions, including questions of jurisdiction, venue, and substantive legal issues.
- Drafted orders for social security appeals and habeas corpus petitions.
- Presented facts and legal issues in case conferences before and after contested hearings.

Homeless Advocacy Project

Sacramento, California

Intern

March 2001–May 2001

- Conducted in-person intake and follow-up advocacy for homeless clients on a variety of issues pertaining to landlord/tenant law, immigration, and disability and benefits.
- Successfully negotiated a landlord/tenant settlement agreement.
- Prepared successful motions in eviction matters.
- Assisted clients in obtaining Social Security Disability Insurance benefits.

Middleton, Young & Minney
Legal Intern

Sacramento, California
September 2000–November 2000

- Researched and drafted legal memoranda on a variety of education and employment law issues.
- Conferred with and advised clients on legal issues involving charter school creation, expansion and operation.

EDUCATION

University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law
Juris Doctor

Sacramento, California
2002

- Volunteer, Hands On Sacramento

Pomona College
Bachelor of Arts, cum laude, in Politics

Claremont, California
1996

MEMBERSHIPS

- State Bar of California, Member No. 012345 2003–Present
- Board of Directors, Santa Cruz County Court Appointed Special Advocates Program 2008–2011
- Secretary, Placer County Bar Association 2004–2008

LANGUAGE SKILLS

- Proficient in Spanish

PERSONAL INTERESTS

- Off-road motorcycling
- Painting watercolors
- Following the Sacramento River Cats