DRAFTING A LEGAL RESUME

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There is an exception to the above non-discrimination policy as to representatives of the U.S. Department of Defense who discriminate on a basis not permitted by Southwestern's non-discrimination policy or AALS bylaws. This exception is currently made in order to avoid the potential loss of funds that could result if participation in Southwestern's OCIP was denied.

While every effort has been made to provide complete, accurate, and current information, this Guide is not intended to be, and is not, a contract of any kind or description. All information set forth herein is subject to change.

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One of the most important factors in job searching is your resume. This handout provides basic information regarding the purpose and structure of a legal resume. The CSO offers resume and cover letter workshops throughout each semester, as well as a year-round resume review service. Students and alumni can drop off or email their resumes for the CSO to critique at any time -- this service usually takes less than 48 hours.

What is a resume?

A resume is a short account of one's career and qualifications prepared by an applicant for a position.

Is it the same as a Curriculum Vitae?

A Curriculum Vitae ("C.V.") is usually used after you have established yourself in a career and have several pages of experience and accomplishments and is used to provide a more detailed account. A C.V. is also used to introduce someone as a panelist or speaker as well as in academic settings. In contrast, a resume is a summarized, targeted document.

What is the PURPOSE of a legal resume?

The purpose of a legal resume is to get an interview for a legal position. A resume usually cannot get you a job, but it can get you an interview. A law firm resume will look different than a public interest or externship resume. The same goes for judicial clerkships and fellowships. You may have several different resumes -- one for each employment category you are interested in pursuing.

DRAFTING A LEGAL RESUME

What are the KEY ISSUES in drafting a legal resume?

- CLEAR
- FACTUAL
- CONSISTENT
- ONE PAGE IN LENGTH

Start with a HEADING, which includes:

- Name (do not use nicknames)
- Address
- Telephone Number (If listing a cell phone, it must be answered professionally at all times. The listed telephone number must be correct and have an answering service with a professional greeting.)
- E-Mail Address (Do not use unprofessional or "cutesy" addresses.)

John H. Doe
2121 Arrow Drive
Hermosa Beach, CA 90254
(310) 777-8989
jhd@aol.com

Follow by listing your EDUCATION:

Even if you have had extensive work experience prior to law school, EDUCATION is still listed first because you are seeking legal employment, and the employer is interested in your legal education more than prior non-legal aspects.

Begin with Southwestern Law School and list schools in reverse chronological order. List degree-granting institutions only, unless: 1) you received special honors or distinctions at other schools; 2) you participated in a Summer Abroad Program, or 3) there is a relevant reason for listing the non-degree granting school for the position you are seeking. List all activities and/or honors under the institution at which you received it, not as a separate heading (i.e. Dean's List, Study Abroad, Student Groups, Scholarships, etc.).

DO LIST:

- Your anticipated graduation date (month and year)
- Class rank if it is Top 30% or better
- GPA if it is 3.0 or higher
- Academic Honors (i.e. Dean's List, CALI awards, scholarships, etc.)
- Participation in student groups (i.e. Public Interest Law Society, etc.)
- Participation in Moot Court, TAHP, Law Review/Journal, etc.

DO NOT LIST:

- High school or high school activities
- LSAT score
- Birthdate or age
- Your program (i.e., Day, Evening, PLEAS, SCALE) or the year that you enrolled

Southwestern Law School, Los Angeles, CA
Juris Doctor Candidate, May 2008
Class Rank: Top 30 Percent; GPA: 3.199
Member, Moot Court Honors Program, 2006 – 2007
Recipient, Schumacher Scholarship, 2005
Recipient, CALI "Excellence for the Future" Award (highest grade in course): Contracts, Fall 2005

Boston University, Boston, MA
Bachelor of Arts, Sociology, May 2000
Dean's List: Spring 1998, Fall 1999

List your EXPERIENCE

This section follows EDUCATION. After you have practiced for several years, you can reverse these sections and put EXPERIENCE first. Do not differentiate between "legal" and "non-legal" employment unless you have extensive work experience which would require more than one page.

The goal of the EXPERIENCE section is to correlate your *qualifications, accomplishments,* and *transferable skills* to the legal position sought. Make sure this section lists and/or highlights:

- Research skills
- Drafting reports, memoranda, speeches, correspondence, manuals
- Problem solving
- Critical thinking (evaluating and analyzing)
- Fact gathering, investigating
- Interfacing with management, clients, the legal community
- Negotiating, contract writing
- Persuasive abilities
- Oral presentations including speeches, panels, seminars, teaching
- Interviewing, training, hiring, supervising, managing
- Organization, coordination, calendaring

List entries in reverse chronological order; beginning with current or most recent employment. You can include paid positions, externships, public interest work, and volunteer positions in this section. For each listing, be consistent and use CONSISTENT FORMAT, e.g.:

Line 1: Name of Employer, City, State
Line 2: Position Title, Dates of Employment
Line 3: Descriptive (i.e., job duties)

- Start each "sound byte" with an active verb
- Use proper tense (present tense for current employment, past tense for all others)
- Link the descriptions together in paragraph form
- Separate each item using a semi-colon (;)
- Do NOT use bullet points, they take up too much space and look like "filler"
- Be concise; include only relevant information
- Delete articles such as "a" "an" "the"

Breidenbach, Huchting & Hamblet, Los Angeles, CA
Law Clerk, May – September 2006
Drafted motions, including motion for summary judgment; performed legal research; drafted memoranda regarding research results; analyzed and reviewed file materials and made recommendations for future handling; interviewed clients; drafted responses to interrogatories

Manhattan Coolers, Manhattan Beach, CA
Bartender, March 1999 – May 2002
Supervised six employees; communicated with vendors; analyzed consumption trends and made recommendations for capital equipment purchases; handled large cash volume

<u>Additional Entries</u>

These sections will follow your EXPERIENCE section, if space allows. You can add headings such as:

- Publications (see page 7)
- Language Skills
- Community Activities (include volunteer)*
- Personal Interests (be specific)**
- Computer Skills (only if they are relevant for the position or an employer is seeking specific skills; see page 8)

* If using the resume for a public interest position, then community and volunteer experience becomes more relevant and should take a PROMINENT place on your resume. See page 9 for a Public Interest Resume.

** Personal Interests should be neutral or positive. Stay clear of anything political, religious, or immature. Think about what stereotypes an employer may think of based on your interests. Overly vague (e.g., "travel" or "athletics") do not provide anything interesting to discuss so be as specific as possible (e.g., "visiting U.S. national parks"). Also, do not list personal interests unless you can carry a conversation on the topic.

REFERENCES

NEVER put "References Available Upon Request" at the bottom of the page; prepare a separate page for your List of References. References should only be provided when they are specifically requested by an employer; do not automatically include or offer them.

Quick Tips

- DO proofread and have someone else you trust also proofread your resume
- DO tailor resume to position sought
- DO use good quality paper in white or off-white and print your resume on a laser printer
- DO have resume reviewed by Career Services
- DO be prepared to discuss your resume in an interview
- DO make sure the dash size in your date entries are consistently the same (all large or small)
- DO NOT use "I" or "My" in descriptions
- DO NOT use obscure abbreviations or symbols
- DO NOT "decorate" with symbols, photos, clip art, etc.
- DO NOT misrepresent information
- DO NOT include a photo
- DO NOT mix typeface (font style) -- it can be very distracting
- DO NOT list job objectives or summaries
- DO NOT repeat the year if your dates are in the same year (Correct: May – August 2009;

  Incorrect: May 2009 – August 2009)

- - P R I O R L E G A L E X P E R I E N C E - -

WILMA LEXINGTON

901 First Street; Los Angeles, California 90016
(213) 970-0900; wlex@aol.com

EDUCATION

SOUTHWESTERN LAW SCHOOL, Los Angeles, California
Juris Doctor Candidate, May 2008
Class Rank: Top 20 Percent; Grade Point Average: 3.421
Articles Editor, Southwestern Law Review, 2007 – 2008
Member, Southwestern Law Review, 2006 – 2007
Member, Women's Law Association, 2006 – Present
Participant, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program, 2007 – Present

UNIVERSITY OF WEST LOS ANGELES, Los Angeles, California
SCHOOL OF PARALEGAL STUDIES
Specialist Certificate in Litigation, June 2003

BOSTON UNIVERSITY, Boston, Massachusetts
Bachelor of Science, Political Science, May 2001

EXPERIENCE

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY, Los Angeles, California
Certified Law Clerk/Extern, Threat Assessment Unit, May 2006 – Present
Handle preliminary hearings; perform legal research on criminal law issues; draft motions; review, analyze and summarize primary and secondary legal material; index documents

LAW OFFICES OF JONATHAN BACH, Long Beach, California
Paralegal, August 2003 – August 2005
Drafted and filed petitions; supervised clerical activities; drafted correspondence for attorneys' signatures; interfaced regularly with clients and their representatives; maintained trial and filing calendars; managed all paper flow

OVERTON EATON & MANTA, Boston, Massachusetts
Legal Secretary, June 2001 – July 2003
Administered real estate, commercial loan closing, antitrust and international business loan matters; handled clerical duties

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Basic Spanish

INTERESTS

Waterskiing; Cultivating orchids; Russian literature

- - E V E N I N G S T U D E N T - -

STEVE PEDERSON

steve.pederson@hotmail.com

18714 Angel Street
Pacific Palisades, California 91207

[cell] 213-739-4271
[home] 310-461-9832

EDUCATION

SOUTHWESTERN LAW SCHOOL, Los Angeles, California
Juris Doctor Candidate, May 2009
Recipient, CALI "Excellence for the Future" Awards [highest grade in course]:
Legal Research and Writing I, Fall 2005; Contracts, Fall 2005
Recipient, Exceptional Achievement Award [tied for highest grade in course]:
Criminal Procedure, Spring 2006
Recipient, Witkin Award for Academic Excellence [highest grade in course]:
Federal Corporation Taxation, Fall 2006
Student Member, Los Angeles County Bar Association, 2006 – 2009

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, Berkeley, California
Bachelor of Arts, History*, With Honors*, May 1998

EXPERIENCE

TICOR INSURANCE COMPANY, Torrance, California
Senior Commercial Industrial Escrow Officer, November 2000 – Present
Commercial Industrial Escrow Officer, June – November 2000
Coordinate complex commercial/industrial real estate transactions throughout United States; update principals, attorneys, title officers and lenders about important developments; obtain and prepare escrow instructions; open, review and clear Title Reports; prepare required documents; audit and close transactions

CHICAGO TITLE INSURANCE COMPANIES, Berkeley, California
Escrow Officer, January 1999 – May 2000
Handled all types and phases of escrow management, including residential, bulk sale, syndications and tax-deferred exchanges

SAFECO TITLE INSURANCE COMPANY, Gardena, California
Title Officer, August 1998 – December 1999
Administered residential escrows; prepared escrow documents and correspondence

ACTIVITIES

Board Member, Los Angeles Homeless Prevention Project, 2000 – 2002
Director, Handicapped Children's Foundation, 2003 – 2004

MARY J. SMITH

901 First Street • Los Angeles, California 90016 • (213) 970-0900 • mjsmith@yahoo.com

EDUCATION

Southwestern Law School, Los Angeles, California
Juris Doctor Candidate, May 2007
Grade Point Average: 3.129
Octa-Finalist, Intramural Moot Court Competition, 2005
Treasurer, Women's Law Association, 2005 – 2006
Member, Public Interest Law Committee, 2004 – 2007

Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts
Bachelor of Arts, Political Science, June 2003

EXPERIENCE

United States District Court, Central District of California, Los Angeles, California
Judicial Extern to the Honorable Ronald S.W. Lew, May 2006 – Present
Analyze pleadings and motions; research applicable law; prepare bench memoranda with proposed rulings for Judge

Southwestern Law School, Los Angeles, California
Research Assistant to Professor Miranda Murphy, January – May 2006
Researched changes in federal tax law to facilitate updating of treatise

Walsh, Walsh & Small, Los Angeles, California
Law Clerk, May – August 2005
Conducted extensive legal research; drafted legal memoranda and pleadings; attended court hearings and client meetings with attorneys

Bank of The Elms, Los Angeles, California
Teller, June 2003 – July 2004
Collected deposits and disbursed funds; maintained and balanced cash drawer; provided excellent customer service

PUBLICATION

New Northern Neighbor? An Independent Quebec, the United States, and NAFTA, 2 **[Journal Volume]** Southwestern Journal of International Law, 1 **[Journal Number]**, 265-291 **[page numbers]**, 2007 **[Year]**

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Fluent French

INTERESTS

Running Marathons; Gourmet Cooking; Photography

- - T E C H N I C A L B A C K G R O U N D R E S U M E -

TON CHANG

59 North Brand Boulevard 818-567-4076
Glendale, California 91202 tonc67@att.net

EDUCATION

SOUTHWESTERN LAW SCHOOL, Los Angeles, California
Juris Doctor Candidate, May 2006

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, Los Angeles, California
Master of Science, Computer Science, June 1999

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, Pomona, California
Bachelor of Arts, Computer Science, June 1997

REGISTRATION

Patent Agent, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, 2005
Professional Engineer, State of California, 2000

EXPERIENCE

ROTRON CORPORATION, El Segundo, California
Software Developer, July 1999 – Present
Participate in porting document processing software product from Rotron proprietary hardware to Sun workstations; modify and enhance existing software; work closely with Japanese Fuji Rotron developers; serve on committee recommending ways to meet future network storage needs on site; author documents to configure development environment

SOUTHWESTERN LAW SCHOOL, Los Angeles, CA
Participant, Children's Rights Clinic, January – May 2005
Represented children in administrative hearings; performed legal research; interviewed clients regarding potential legal action; interacted with opposing counsel and court personnel; drafted research memoranda

DECTRO CORPORATION, Pomona, California
Software Developer, September 1997 – June 1999
Designed, implemented, and tested various components of Local Area Network software package for IBM PC's that conformed to Open Systems Interconnection specification of International Standards Organization

TRO TECHNICAL INSTITUTE, Los Angeles, California
Accounting/Programming Instructor, July 1996 – June 1997
Developed curriculum; provided instruction in Accounting, Lotus, WordPerfect, Dbase, DOS, Paradox, Basic, Fortran, and Cobol programming

LANGUAGES

Fluent Mandarin and Taiwanese; Basic Cantonese

COMPUTER SKILLS

Unix, MS-DOS, VMS, Xwindows, and SunView operating systems and environments; Mesa, C, Pascal, and LISP computer languages; Sun IBM, DEC VAX, and HP LAN Analyzer computer hardware

- - P U B L I C I N T E R E S T R E S U M E - -

HANNAH L. VARGAS

8967 Langley Street; Westminster, California 96251
(310) 762-7951; hvargas@yahoo.com

EDUCATION

Southwestern Law School, Los Angeles, California
Juris Doctor Candidate, May 2007
Chair, Board of Governors, Trial Advocacy Honors Program, 2006 – 2007
Member, Trial Advocacy Honors Program, 2005 – 2006
Recipient, Alternate Oralist Award, Intramural Moot Court Competition, 2005
Member, Women's Law Association, 2004 – 2006
Participant, London Summer Abroad Program, University of Miami School of Law, June – August 2005

University of California, Los Angeles, California
Bachelor of Arts, Psychology & Anthropology [double major], June 2003
Participant, Education Abroad Program, University of Delhi, India, June – December 2002

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Domestic Violence Project, Los Angeles, California
Volunteer, Los Angeles Superior Court, February – July 2006
Interviewed domestic violence victims; assisted in filing restraining orders

UCLA Women's Resource Center, Los Angeles, California
Peer Educator, Sexual Violence Programs, January – June 2002
Conducted university-wide sexual violence awareness programs; served as Student Director for *Take Back the Night* which raises awareness about campus safety and provides support to victims of violence

WORK EXPERIENCE

Los Angeles District Attorney's Office, Los Angeles, California
Certified Law Student, June – August 2006
Conducted preliminary hearings and took felony pleas at Lynwood Regional Justice Center

Southwestern Law School, Los Angeles, California
Research Assistant for Professor Miranda Murphy, June – August 2006
Researched and analyzed the area of "privileges" in the California Evidence Code for upcoming casebook

Institute of Advanced Management, LLC, Whittier, California
Executive Assistant, May – July 2003
Performed public relations duties for Master Arbitrator/Professor; assisted with editing and preparation of course work for arbitration, mediation, and negotiation training courses taught nationwide

LANGUAGES

Fluent Spanish, Conversational Italian, Basic French

MARK BRADFORD

2041 Parkway Avenue (213) 774-6291
Los Angeles, California 90204 mbrad52@sprint.net

ADMITTED

State Bar of California, December 2005
United States District Court, Central District of California, December 2005

EDUCATION

Southwestern Law School, Los Angeles, California
***Juris Doctor*, May 2005**
Class Rank: Top 30 Percent
Notes & Comments Editor, Southwestern Journal of International Law, 2004 – 2005
Octa-Finalist, Intramural Moot Court Competition, 2003

Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana
***Bachelor of Science*, Electrical Engineering, June 1999**
Chairman, Campus Recreational Sports Committee
Director, Treasurer's Council

EXPERIENCE

Robert Benson & Associates, Santa Monica, California
Attorney, December 2005 – Present
Handle heavy caseload including all aspects of general practice such as preparation of pleadings, motions, writs, discovery, settlement negotiations, and trial and appellate briefs; perform extensive legal research; interview and advise clients; appear in court on criminal matters; assist in superior and federal court on major trials

Office of the City Attorney, Santa Monica, California
***Law Clerk, Civil Advisory Section*,** June 2004 – May 2005
Drafted and interpreted ordinances; researched and drafted City Attorney Opinions and Memoranda; advised Zoning Administrator and Planning Commission on Land Use Planning Law; prepared staff reports for City Council and Planning Commission; revised Environmental Regulations; drafted contracts; coordinated sale and acquisition of real property

Holy Trinity High School, Bloomington, Indiana
Biology Teacher, September 1999 – June 2002
Prepared lessons plans; provided daily instruction; administered examinations; interacted with parents, school board and community

LANGUAGES

Fluent French; Conversational Spanish

INTERESTS

Avid Lakers Fan; Snow Skiing; Collecting Vintage Law Books

ACTION VERBS FOR USE IN LEGAL RESUMES

accomplished
achieved
adapted
administered
advised
analyzed
appointed
approved
arbitrated
arranged
budgeted
built
cataloged
clarified
conceived
conducted
constructed
consulted
contracted
controlled
converted
coordinated
correlated
counseled
created
delegated
demonstrated
designed
detailed
developed
devised
directed
discovered
distributed
drafted
earned
edited
effected
engineered
enlarged
established
evaluated
examined
executed
expanded
expedited
experienced
formed
formulated
founded
generated
governed
grouped
guided
improved
increased
implemented
indexed
influenced
initiated
innovated
inspired
installed
integrated
interpreted
interviewed
introduced
invented
investigated
justified
led
litigated
maintained
managed
mediated
moderated
monitored
motivated
negotiated
operated
ordered
originated
performed
planned
presented
prepared
presided
processed
programmed
promoted
proposed
provided
published
recruited
rectified
reduced
regulated
reinforced
reorganized
reviewed
revised
scheduled
simplified
sold
solved
sorted
sparked
straightened
streamlined
structured
succeeded
supervised
systematized
tailored
taught
trained
transformed
translated
unified
updated
verified
wrote