JUDICIAL CLERKSHIP
COVER LETTER & RESUME INFORMATION

Updated November 2013

Cover Letters: General Considerations

Cover letters are the first piece of your writing that a judge sees. The letters and resumes for each judge must be error-free, produced on good bond paper (white or cream), and signed with blue or black ink. Judges will make decisions on the basis of the complete package: letters, resumes, recommendations, transcripts, and writing samples.

Typically, the cover letter for a judicial clerkship application will be more concise than for other types of applications. Especially for federal court and state supreme court applications, connection to the geographical area is not normally a critical factor, nor is there a need to demonstrate a career commitment to the position.

Sometimes you may wish to communicate a fact not obvious from your resume and not likely to appear in a letter of recommendation. For example, if you are from a particular area of the country, and are applying to judges in that area, you might want to mention your local roots. Or you may wish to mention prior business experience that affects your legal ability. Or, if you are applying to judges concerned with a particular specialty (such as bankruptcy), you may wish to mention your coursework in that area. The second and third letters following this page illustrate how letters might communicate such facts.

Some judges do like more personalized letters, to demonstrate that you have researched the judge and tailored your application accordingly. If you share a common interest or connection with the judge, it may be worth mentioning in your cover letter (i.e. if you are an alumnus of the same school or know someone in common). However, this can be very labor intensive if you plan to apply to many judges.

Rarely, a candidate might profitably write a more aggressive letter, one that summarizes the resume and puts a favorable spin on it. This is a risky strategy. Students sometimes write, "My first year at law school enabled me to improve my writing and my analytic skills." You look naive if you claim to differ from other candidates on such generic ground. Or, "I would like to clerk in order to see whether a career in the judiciary is for me." Some judges may be put off by a declaration that you think yourself good enough for the judge's own job, rather than a mere clerkship.

If you do write at length, though, you must write carefully. An indelicate cover letter won’t help you anywhere. Keep in mind that a cover letter is, in essence, a piece of advocacy. You should think about how it will sound to your audience, and you should consider whether to write different letters to different judges. For additional guidance, please see the *How to Write a Resume* and *How to Write a Cover Letter* documents provided by the Office of Career Services. Common sense will be your most trustworthy guide. When in doubt, be brief.

A note about salutations and addressing cover letters and envelopes:
It is especially important to properly address judges in correspondence. Use the chart below to help in addressing envelopes and cover letters, as well as for salutations in letters.

Court	**Addressee**	**Address on cover letter & envelope**	**Salutation**
U.S. Supreme Court	The Chief Justice	The Honorable [Full Name] Chief Justice of the United States The Supreme Court Address	Dear Chief Justice [Last Name]:
U.S. Supreme Court	Associate Justice	The Honorable [Full Name] Associate Justice The Supreme Court Address	Dear Justice [Last Name]:
U.S. Court of Appeals	Chief Judge	Honorable [Full Name] Chief Judge United States Court of Appeals for the [Number-th] Circuit Address	Dear Judge [Last Name]:
U.S. Court of Appeals	Judge	Honorable [Full Name] United States Court of Appeals for the [Number-th] Circuit Address	Dear Judge [Last Name]:
U.S. District Court	Chief Judge	Honorable [Full Name] Chief Judge United States District Court for the [District Name] Address	Dear Judge [Last Name]:
U.S. District Court	Judge	Honorable [Full Name] United States District Court for the [District Name] Address	Dear Judge [Last Name]:
U.S. Magistrate	Judge	Honorable [Full Name] United States Magistrate Judge United States District Court for the [District Name] Address	Dear Judge [Last Name]:

U.S. Bankruptcy	Chief Judge	Honorable Judge [Full Name] Chief Judge United States Bankruptcy Court for the [District Name] Address	Dear Judge [Last Name]:
U.S. Bankruptcy	Judge	Honorable Judge [Full Name] United States Bankruptcy Court for the [District Name] Address	Dear Judge [Last Name]:
State Supreme Court	Chief Justice	Honorable [Full Name] Chief Justice Supreme Court for the State of [State] Address	Dear Justice [Last Name]:
State Supreme Court	Justice	Honorable [Full Name] Supreme Court for the State of [State] Address	Dear Justice [Last Name]:

GENERAL MODEL

[YOUR NAME]
[Your address and phone; in the format of your resume]

[Date]

The Honorable [Full Name]
[Address]

Dear Judge [Last Name]:

[Paragraph stating that you wish to apply for a clerkship and naming your recommenders]

[If you choose to write at greater length: paragraph describing additional facts about yourself]

[Concluding paragraph, listing enclosures and volunteering to supply more information if needed. If you wish, you may omit this paragraph, too.]

Sincerely,

[Your name]

Enclosures

SHORT VERSION Including Letters of Recommendation

[YOUR NAME]
1900 N. Prospect Ave., #303
Chicago, IL 60611
312-555-5555

September XX, 20XX

The Honorable Xxx Xxxx
United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois
Everett McKinley Dirksen United States Courthouse
219 S. Dearborn St.
Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Judge Xxxx:

I am a third-year law student at Loyola University Chicago School of Law and wish to apply for a clerkship in your chambers following my graduation in May 20XX. A resume, transcript, writing sample and letters of recommendation from Xxx Xxxx, Yyy Yyyy, and Zzz Zzzz are enclosed. Should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

[your name]

Enclosures

LETTER DETAILING BACKGROUND

[YOUR NAME]
1900 N. Prospect Ave., #303
Chicago, IL 60211
312-555-5555

September XX, 20XX

The Honorable Xxx Xxxx
United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois
Everett McKinley Dirksen United States Courthouse
219 S. Dearborn St.
Chicago, IL 60606

Dear Judge Xxxx:

I am a third-year law student at Loyola University Chicago School of Law and wish to apply for a clerkship in your chambers following my graduation in May 20XX.

In addition to pursuing a traditional course of legal study, I have [extensive practical business experience/participated in several clinical programs/studied legal philosophy in depth]; and so have had an opportunity to develop additional perspective on the challenges of adjudication.

A resume, transcript, writing sample and letters of recommendation from Xxx Xxxx, Yyy Yyyy, and Zzz Zzzz are enclosed. Should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

Enclosures

GEOGRAPHICAL INTEREST

[YOUR NAME]
1900 N. Prospect Ave., #303
Chicago, IL 60611
312-555-5555

September XX, 20XX

The Honorable Judge Xxx Xxxx
United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois
Everett McKinley Dirksen United States Courthouse
219 S. Dearborn St.
Chicago, IL 60606

Dear Judge Xxxx:

I am a third-year law student at Loyola University Chicago School of Law and wish to apply for a clerkship in your chambers following my graduation in May 20XX. As a native of [name of state], I have a special interest in clerking in the [name of city] area.

A resume, transcript, writing sample and letters of recommendation from Xxx Xxxx, Yyy Yyyy, and Zzz Zzzz are enclosed. Should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

[your name]

Enclosures

Pamela Beasley Halpert
121 W. Chestnut, Apt. 123, Chicago, IL 60611 • 312-555-0155 • pbhalpert@lawschool.edu

August 21, 2008

The Honorable Thomas J. Curran
United States District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin
250 United States Courthouse and Federal Building
517 E. Wisconsin Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Judge Curran:

I am a third-year law student Loyola University Chicago School of Law and wish to apply for a clerkship in your chambers following my graduating in May 2009.

As Editor in Chief of the *Loyola Law Journal* and brief writer for Loyola's National Moot Court team, I have had the chance to develop significant legal research and writing skills. In addition to these law school activities, I have extensive experience working as a regional director for the Speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives and as a lobbyist for business and non-profit organizations. As a result, I have developed a unique perspective on the policy considerations behind many legal issues.

Enclosed please find a resume, transcript, writing sample and letters of recommendation from Professor John Bronsteen and Professor Spencer Waller. Should you require additional information, or which to schedule an interview, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Pamela Beasley Halpert
Pamela Beasley Halpert

Pamela Beasley Halpert

121 W. Chestnut, Apt. 123, Chicago, IL 60611 • 312-555-0155 • pbhalpert@lawschool.edu

EDUCATION

Loyola University Chicago School of Law, Chicago, Illinois
Juris Doctor, Expected May 2009
GPA 3.63/4.00
Class Rank 5/58

- Editor in Chief, *Loyola University Chicago Law Journal*
- Best Brief – 2007 National Moot Court Competition – Midwest Region
- Best Brief – 2007 Loyola Intraschool Moot Court Competition

University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA
Bachelor of Arts – Political Science/History, *May 2000*

EXPERIENCE

Jenner & Block LLP, Chicago, Illinois
Summer Associate, May 2008 – Present

- Researched and drafted legal memoranda for trial and appellate proceedings.
- Participated in the representation of a utility company in small-claims court by creating exhibits, preparing witnesses and researching evidentiary issues.
- Assisted attorney in commercial arbitration by developing issues for cross examination of expert witnesses and researching Illinois contract law.

National-Louis University, Chicago, Illinois
Director of Government & Community Affairs, July 2005 – April 2008

- Developed and implemented state and federal government relations plan.
- Organized public events for the university president.

Cullen & Associates, Springfield, Illinois
Contract Lobbyist, February 2005 – June 2005

- Lobbied members of the General Assembly on behalf of business and government clients.
- Tracked legislation and prepared weekly reports for clients.

Illinois House of Representatives, Office of the Speaker, Chicago, Illinois
Chicago Operations Manager, January 2003 – January 2005
Program Specialist, Issue Development Unit, December 2001 – January 2003

- Supervised 25 full and part-time employees in Chicago and Northern Illinois.
- Created and implemented grassroots outreach programs for Democratic incumbents.

Democratic Party of Illinois / Friends of Michael J. Madigan, Chicago, Illinois
Northern Illinois Regional Coordinator / Campaign Staff, June 2001 – January 2005

- Served in various roles on local, state representative and statewide campaigns.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Midtown Education Foundation, Chicago, Illinois
Volunteer, May 2005 – Present

- Mentored grade school students, including academic tutoring and character development

GEORGE-MICHAEL BLUTH
525 N. Wabash, Apt. #1005D, Chicago, IL 60611 • 312-555-0111 • gbluth@lawschool.edu

September 8, 2009

The Honorable Wayne R. Andersen
United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois
1486 Everett McKinley Dirksen United States Courthouse
219 South Dearborn Street
Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Judge Andersen:

I am a third-year law student at Loyola University Chicago School of Law and wish to apply for a clerkship in your chambers following my graduation in May of 2010. After spending the last few years in Chicago, I would like to remain in the area following graduation.

After reading your opinion in *Alvarado v. Battaglia*, I am confident that we would work well together and that my writing style would complement your expectations and preferences. I found your argument pertaining to the ability of a prisoner to state an excessive force claim particularly interesting. I would enjoy discussing the case more thoroughly with you at your convenience.

A resume, transcript, writing sample, and letters of recommendation from Professor Alice Perlin, Professor James Carey, and Dean Michael Kaufman are enclosed. Should you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

George-Michael Bluth
George-Michael Bluth

Enclosures:
Resume
Transcript
Writing Sample
Letters of recommendation

GEORGE-MICHAEL BLUTH

525 N. Wabash, Apt. #1005D, Chicago, IL 60611 • 312-555-0111 • gbluth@lawschool.edu

EDUCATION

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO SCHOOL OF LAW, CHICAGO, IL

Juris Doctor expected, May 2010
G.P.A. 3.75/4.0 Ranking Top 10th percentile
Loyola Law Journal, Executive Editor, Lead Articles
CALI Award for the highest grade in Legal Writing, Spring 2008
Contracts Academic Tutor
Dean's List
Mock Trial Team Member, Regional Champion 2008
Executive Board, Catholic Lawyers Guild

GRINELL COLLEGE, GRINELL, IA

Bachelor of Arts, May 2007
Major in English / Minors in Spanish and History

LEGAL EXPERIENCE

- **WINSTON & STRAWN LLP,** CHICAGO, IL, Summer 2009
  Summer associate working on medical and legal practice and products liability trials

- **HINSHAW & CULBERTSON LLP,** CHICAGO, IL, Spring 2009
  Law clerk in the Healthcare and Litigation Services Group

- **REHABILITATION INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO,** CHICAGO, IL, Spring 2009
  Intern in the Office of the General Counsel working on compliance issues, litigation research, and drafting a segregation of duties policy

- **SUPREME COURT OF NEBRASKA,** LINCOLN, NE, Summer 2008
  Intern to Justice John Gerrard, wrote certiorari reviews and memoranda or law, assisted drafting and editing opinions, prepared Justice for conference and argument

- **PROFESSOR MICHAEL KAUFMAN,** CHICAGO, IL, Summer 2008
  Legal research assistant for work on special education article

- **PROFESSOR LARRY SINGER,** CHICAGO, IL, Summer 2008
  Legal research assistant for various projects regarding modern health care

PUBLICATIONS

- *Contextualizing ADR in Managed Care*, 38 LOYOLA L. J. 900 (2008).

INTERESTS

- Interests include volunteering, officiating and playing lacrosse, and playing the violin

Elizabeth Lemon
160 N. State Street, Apt. 102, Chicago, IL 60610 • 312-555-0155 • elemon@lawschool.edu

September 8, 2009

The Honorable Arlander Keys
United States Magistrate Judge for the Northern District of Illinois
2230 Everett McKinley Dirksen United States Courthouse
219 South Dearborn Street
Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Judge Keys:

I am a third-year student at Loyola University Chicago School of Law, and I would like to apply for a clerkship in your chambers following my graduation in May 2010. My resume, transcript, and writing sample are enclosed. I have also included letters of recommendation from Professors Spencer Waller, John Breen, and Lori Fulton.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need any additional information. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Lemon
Elizabeth Lemon

Elizabeth Lemon

160 N. State Street, Apt. 102, Chicago, IL 60610 • 312-555-0155 • elemon@lawschool.edu

EDUCATION

Loyola University Chicago School of Law, Chicago, IL
Juris Doctor expected, May 2010

- **GPA:** 3.79/4.0, **Rank:** 6/226, **CALI Awards:** Legal Writing I and II, Appellate Advocacy
- **Managing Editor,** *Loyola Law Journal*
- Member, Health Law Moot Court Team, 2008 National Moot Court Competition
  - *Best Brief*, being published in *Journal of Legal Medicine* (December 2009)
  - *3rd Place Overall*
- Fellow, Institute for Consumer Antitrust Studies

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
Bachelor of Arts in History, May 2005

LEGAL EXPERIENCE

Clifford Law Offices, P.C.
Law Clerk, January 2009 – August 2009

- Researched and drafted responses to motions to dismiss and summary judgment

U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois, Judge Blanche Manning
Extern, January 2009 – May 2009

- Drafted opinion for a habeas corpus case and memoranda for criminal law motions

Loyola University Chicago School of Law, Professor Spencer Waller
Research Assistant, May 2008 – August 2008

U.S. Attorney's Office, Northern District of Illinois
Extern, January 2008 – May 2008

- Performed legal research and document review regarding tax and financial fraud issues

U.S. Department of Justice, Antitrust Division
Paralegal, July 2005 – July 2007

- Composed memoranda summarizing potential witness interviews for merger investigations
- *Special Achievement Award for Sustained Superior Performance*, March 2007
- *Department of Justice Pro Bono Award for Distinguished Service*, 2006 and 2007

VOLUNTEER/PERSONAL INTERESTS

- **Mentor,** Big Brother Big Sister of the National Capitol Area, July 2005 – February 2007
- **Lector,** Holy Trinity Church, December 2005 – May 2007