SELF-ASSESSMENT – JUDICIAL CLERKSHIPS

Factors to consider when deciding about clerkships:

A. Type of Clerkship
   1. Trial or appellate
   2. State, federal, or international

B. Reasons for seeking a clerkship
   1. Research and writing; practical training
   2. Work closely with a judge; gain a mentor
   3. Gain insight into the legal system and how judges work
   4. See different attorneys’ styles of practice
   5. Exposure to a variety of legal issues and areas of law
   6. The credential on your resume

C. Constraints on clerkship search
   1. Geography
   2. Family ties
   3. Place(s) you want to practice law
   4. Time – can you only clerk right after graduation? Can you/would you prefer to clerk later?
   5. Personal preferences for judges (experience on the bench, ideology, etc.)

Factors to consider when evaluating potential strengths and weaknesses in your application:

A. Law school experience
   1. Clinic
   2. Journal experience or other significant legal writing
   3. Moot court
   4. Academic record
   5. Other law school activities

B. Other academic experience (e.g., advanced degree)

C. Nonacademic experience and interests (might show skills, or interesting, well-rounded personality)
   1. Jobs (paid and volunteer)
   2. Proficiency in more than one language
   3. Travel
   4. Any other interesting, distinguishing items

D. Writing Sample (substantive legal writing generally preferable)
   1. Law school work
   2. Work for employer (seek employer permission and redact)

E. Recommendations (2 or 3) – speak positively, in some detail, about your research/analytical/writing skills
   1. Law Faculty
      a. Supervised work or writing
      b. Known through a small class (1st year or seminar)
      c. Research assistant or teaching assistant
      d. Written a good exam
   2. Legal Employers
      a. Know your writing/analytical skills
      b. Speak positively about other attributes (intellect, work habits, character, etc.)
   3. Nonlegal Employers or Faculty -- not viewed as well as legal faculty/employers
      a. Know your writing/analytical skills
      b. Speak positively about other attributes (intellect, character, work habits, etc.)