
Cover Letters

Career Services Office
University of Notre Dame
Law School

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LETTERS

Throughout law school, you will find that much of your communication with employers will be by mail, and increasingly by e-mail. In every letter you write, the approach you take, and the language with which you state your interest will help the reader decide whether to interview you or not.

Each letter should reflect your personality while getting your message across clearly and succinctly. Because the tone of correspondence can be impersonal, strive for letters with a warm and personalized tone, yet business-like in approach.

COVER LETTERS

A particular type of letter, a cover letter, should accompany your resume whenever you mail it in response to a known opening or as part of your direct mail canvassing. The cover letter is an important supplement to your resume. It should indicate your short or long term goals, your reasons for applying, and your availability for interviews. In addition, it should cover any pertinent information not presented in your resume and/or highlight an aspect of your resume to which you wish to draw the reader's attention. A cover letter allows for flexibility, tailoring, and amplification -- not always possible in the resume. Personalizing each cover letter and making reference to the recipient's practice lends credibility to your request for consideration, reflects the time you have spent in analyzing the firm's practice, and states how your skills fit into that practice. The letter itself should be no longer than one page and no more than three (3) paragraphs. Make certain it is well written and error free. Pay special attention to grammatical and spelling accuracy. Use the same paper as is used for your resume -- good quality 8-1/2" x 11" bond paper that has at least 25% cotton content. White paper is considered the most professional for the legal profession. No letter that contains an error or a corrected error should be sent. A standard business format should be followed. Use a colon to punctuate the salutation. Examples of cover letters and sample sentences are included in the latter part of this booklet.

Whenever possible, avoid mass producing your cover letters. A letter that reflects careful research on an individual employer will convey your interest better than a "generic" letter. Your

prospects for employment will vastly improve if you selectively choose prospective employers to contact. Let the letter reflect your individuality by describing what is particularly appealing to you about an employer. For example, let the employer know if you have read some of its recent cases. Use the current news features available on both Westlaw and LexisNexis. Up-to-date knowledge in an employer's field is a big plus. You may wish to scan the headlines or read current issues of periodicals in an employer's area of practice. The Internet is an invaluable tool in accessing newspapers and other periodicals, and the library subscribes to many periodicals and may have issues you are seeking. For example, check the Internet and the law library for periodicals on environmental law if you are seeking a position in the environmental law field. If you expect employers to give you special attention, you must first expend time and effort to find out about them. The extra time is worthwhile in the long run.

If multiple letters are sent, be certain that all the employers in a mailing practice the same type of law, have approximately the same number of attorneys, and practice in the same geographic area. Write your letter to one specific employer and then make any minor adjustments necessary to make your letter appropriate for all other similarly-situated employers. Remember that mass-produced letters neither impress the employers nor encourage special consideration of your application. Every attempt should be made to make a targeted mailing to a group of homogenous employers appear as individualized as possible.

Better results are achieved if a specific letter is written for each employer in which you are interested. Portions of both the first and second paragraph should change in order to make the letter specific to a particular employer. In the first paragraph, indicate why you are applying. In the second paragraph, indicate why the employer should hire you and why you are qualified for the job that is available. Elaborate on items in your resume. Emphasize certain other items of information. Add information that is not mentioned in your resume. Include information about yourself that is relevant to one employer and delete that which is irrelevant. Doing these things strengthens your resume and distinguishes your cover letter from the literally hundreds of other letters of application the employer receives.

Always address each cover letter to a specific person -- ideally to the individual who has the power to hire, to your contact, or to a Notre Dame (or college alma mater) graduate. If you are responding to a notice for an advertised opening, write to the person designated. When you are targeting your search to a specific geographic or practice area, consult directories that list the appropriate contact name. The NALPDirectory.com or other publications in Career Services that include a listing of the proper person to contact are useful resources. When obtaining information derived from a resource such as Martindale Hubbell, be certain to telephone employer offices and ask the name of the hiring partner, the spelling of that name (even Smith can be spelled different ways) and ascertain whether the hiring partner is a Mr. or Ms.

CONTENT

Cover letters should be brief and direct. Do not use flowery language, and do not restate information contained in your resume unless there is something in your background that would be of particular importance to the employer -- you grew up in that city, your family lives in that city, you worked in the area, etc. Your letter should fill gaps in your resume, such as your available dates for employment, bar status, and any other pertinent information not included in your resume.

In your letter, state four important things: (1) **why you are writing** (for a summer clerkship or associate position); (2) **why you are interested in the employing organization**; (3) **why the employer should hire you**; and (4) **when you will be available to interview**. In stating why the firm is of interest to you, give specific reasons why. Is it a substantive area of practice, the size of the firm, its location, someone who knows of your interest suggested you contact the employer, a job notice was posted on the bulletin board, or some other reason? **Avoid beginning a sentence with "I am writing because..."** You want the letter to be about them, and why they should be interested in you.

In telling why you are applying to a particular firm, include a reference to the person who recommended approaching the employer, especially if that person is known to the prospective employer. Such a statement implies that the person making the referral believes that you have qualities that merit consideration by the employer.

INTERVIEW DATE

End your letter on an active note by asking for an interview date. If the employer is some distance away, inform the employer that you will be in the city during a certain week and request an appointment at that time. If after two weeks you have not heard from the employer, you may follow-up and ask if an interview time can be scheduled.

SUMMARY

The actual composition of the cover letter depends on the specifics of the job, the request you are making, your personality, and how well you convey messages about yourself in writing. Your cover letter should show that you are courteous, thoughtful, and that you know how to deal with an employment application. The cover letter gives you the opportunity to convey that you are a distinct person who carefully chose this employer and that you deserve a closer look by the employer.

Examples of letters and a listing of useful sentences follow to serve as guidelines, but try to develop your own style. Read all of the examples. One sentence in any of the letters or the listing may be applicable to you and may help you form your own cover letter. Have fun!

OUTLINE OF A COVER LETTER

Your Address
City, State Zip

Date

Title and Name of Contact Person
Employer Name
Address
City, State Zip

Dear Mr. (Ms.) last name of contact person:

First Paragraph: Tell why you are writing; name the position for which you are applying, and tell how you heard of this opening. If you have a personal referral, mention your contact here. State why you are interested in working for this employer. If you have lived in the area or know it well, mention this. Specify your interests in the type of work the firm does. Describe what is particularly appealing to you about the employer.

Second Paragraph: If you have had experience, courses, publications or clinic experience, be sure to point out what particular achievements you have accomplished in the employer's field or type of work. Indicate why you are qualified for the job. Emphasize pertinent items on your resume; add information that is not specifically mentioned on your resume. Include information that is pertinent to the job for which you are applying.

Third Paragraph: Restate your interest in working for the employer. Have an appropriate closing to pave the way for an interview. Indicate your willingness to interview personally by stating when you will be in the area or by offering to make yourself available at the employer's convenience. You may wish to indicate that you will call the employer's office within a specific week to try and schedule an interview. Thank the employer for his/her consideration.

Sincerely,

(leave 4 blank lines for signature)

Your Name (typed)

Enclosure

EXAMPLE OF LETTER FOR
FIRST SUMMER CLERKING POSITION

456 Main Street
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

December 1, 2008

Ms. Zoe S. Employer
Baker, Cook & Bottlewasher
123 "I" Street
Chicago, Illinois 60606

Dear Ms. Employer:

Having attended college in the Chicago area, I plan to practice in the city with a smaller-sized firm after I graduate in 2011. Baker, Cook & Bottlewasher's concentration in labor law meets my goal of pursuing a career in this field.

Every summer throughout college, I worked in the offices of United States Steel and was promoted to a management position before my junior year. This experience allowed me to see the interplay between supervision and employees from the corporate viewpoint. I gained considerable experience in research and writing while serving as a research assistant for Professor _____. Further, the legal writing program at Notre Dame is extensive. In addition to training in legal research, we prepare memoranda, complaints and an appellate brief.

I would be pleased to discuss my qualifications in an interview scheduled at your convenience. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Addison S. FirstYear

Enclosure

(See page 18 for more sample sentences.)

EXAMPLE OF LETTER FOR
FIRST SUMMER CLERKING POSITION

456 Main Street
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

December 1, 2008

Mr. Brian M. Employer
Smythe, Wilson & Brown
1551 Broadway
New York, New York 10020

Dear Mr. Employer:

Please consider the enclosed copy of my resume as an application for the position of law clerk with your firm. I learned from Career Services that you plan to hire a first-year law student next summer. I was pleased to discover that your firm practices in the area of municipal law because that area is of particular interest to me.

As an intern for the City of New York during college, I helped create and evaluate the city-wide facility needs assessment survey. Participating in this survey gave me a greater understanding of the New York community even though I have lived in the city all my life.

I am very interested in this position and would appreciate the opportunity to further discuss this matter during an interview. I will be in New York from December 15 through January 9 and can interview at your convenience. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Shelby C. FirstYear

(See page 18 for more sample sentences.)

EXAMPLE OF LETTER FOR
SECOND SUMMER CLERKING

456 Main Street
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

August 15, 2008

Ms. Erin C. ContactPerson
Thunder & Lightning
1987 Grand Avenue
Kalamazoo, Michigan 48909

Dear Ms. ContactPerson:

Please accept the enclosed resume as an application for a 2009 summer clerkship position. My family resides in Kalamazoo, and I wish to return there after graduation. After talking with attorney John Thompson, I am convinced I would enjoy being associated with Thunder & Lightning. Mr. Thompson suggested that I write to you.

The range of areas practiced by attorneys in the firm is of interest to me. Having variety in my work is important to me and is exemplified in my pursuit of a liberal arts education. I am taking a broad range of courses in law school in order to provide greater assistance to clients with diverse problems. Last summer I clerked for a solo practitioner and worked on family law, bankruptcy, criminal, real estate and estate planning issues. That experience reaffirmed my interest in a general practice firm.

I travel to Kalamazoo on a regular basis and will be pleased to schedule an interview at your convenience. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for considering my application.

Sincerely,

Maya Z. SecondYear

(See page 18 for more sample sentences.)

**SECOND YEAR -- REAPPLYING TO AN EMPLOYER
ORIGINALLY CONTACTED LAST YEAR**

456 Main Street
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

September 3, 2008

Mr. Lawrence M. Letter
Land and River
7832 Tomahawk Drive
Tucson, Arizona 98765

Dear Mr. Letter:

As you requested last March, I am applying for a clerkship to commence next May. I remain very interested in clerking for your firm, and your work in corporate finance continues to be of interest to me. However, at this point in my legal career, I welcome an opportunity to gain experience and exposure to your firm and do not wish to preclude other practice areas.

Having attended college in Tucson, I am very familiar with the area. My work as an accountant with Arthur Lybrand enabled me to forge friendships and contacts in the Tucson community. My law school courses include _____, _____ and _____, and I am further strengthening my writing this year by developing a paper on the financial implications of a more global economic community.

Because the enclosed resume is merely an overview of my qualifications, I hope that I will have the opportunity to talk with you in person. To that end, I plan to be in Tucson October 16 - 20. I will call your office toward the end of September to see if an October interview can be scheduled. I appreciate your invitation to reapply this fall and look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely,

Christopher A. SecondYear

(See page 18 for more sample sentences.)

**EXAMPLE OF LETTER FOR SECOND YEAR
APPLYING FOR SUMMER CLERKSHIP**

456 Main Street
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

September 1, 2008

Mr. Jerry A. HiringPartner
Miller & Wheat
12 LaSalle Street
Chicago, Illinois 60601

Dear Mr. HiringPartner:

As a life-long resident of the Chicago area, I plan to practice in the city after I graduate in 2010. The areas of litigation and bankruptcy are of particular interest to me, and reading First National Bank vs. USZ increased my interest in your firm. I have enclosed a resume as an application for a 2009 summer position.

My accounting degree was enhanced through my work as a business manager for my college newspaper. My position as assistant manager not only improved my communication skills but also my ability to resolve problems quickly and effectively. I am finding that law school provides ample opportunity to further hone my skills. Some of the courses I will take before graduation are: trial advocacy, debtor and creditor rights, _____, and _____. I believe I could be an important addition to your firm and welcome the opportunity to clerk for you next summer.

I am very interested in clerking for Miller & Wheat. Because I return home regularly, I can interview at your convenience. Thank you in advance for your careful consideration of my application. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Michaela H. SecondYear

(See page 18 for more sample sentences.)

CONNECTION IN THE FIRM
SUMMER CLERKSHIP APPLICATION

456 Main Street
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

February 14, 2009

Mr. Gage M. HiringEmployer
Air, Sky and Rivers
233 Gateway Center
St. Louis, Missouri 68701

Dear Mr. HiringEmployer:

I am writing at the suggestion of (connection) regarding possible employment for this coming summer. When I complete my legal studies, I plan to practice in St. Louis. I am interested in labor law and hope to pursue a career with a firm representing management interests.

I am currently enrolled in _____ and anticipate taking _____ and _____ as well. I worked as a law clerk last summer in the Chicago Regional Office of the National Labor Relations Board. (Here indicate specific work done. Do not simply restate information on your resume. Expand on resume information.) I believe this experience combined with my course work will enable me to contribute to the work of your firm.

I will be in the St. Louis area from March 4 to March 11. I am available to interview during those dates or any other time that may be more convenient for you. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Erin C. SecondYear

Enclosure

(See page 18 for more sample sentences.)

**EXAMPLE OF LETTER FOR SECOND YEAR
APPLYING FOR SECOND SUMMER CLERKSHIP**

456 Main Street
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

September 1, 2008

Ms. Ann Marie Employer
Jordon, Anderson & Canseco
853 Busch Gardens Drive
Tampa, Florida 30404

Dear Ms. Employer:

Your firm has come to my attention through my research for summer employment opportunities. I have a special interest in your firm's tax and estate planning practice.

My ultimate goal is to become a tax attorney. The two years I spent as an internal auditor at Arthur Waterhouse and my summer clerking position with Earnest Whitney provided considerable exposure to tax issues. **

Tampa has a special appeal because I have family and friends in the area. I appreciate your consideration of my qualifications and will travel to Tampa for an interview at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Patricia I. SecondYear

Enclosure

**** Note: This cover letter is brief on paragraph 2 where you should state your experiences, courses, papers/publications, clinical experience, moot court, mock trial, client counseling, etc. for the type of work sought. You are encouraged to develop this paragraph according to your particular situation.**

**EXAMPLE OF LETTER FOR SECOND YEAR
APPLYING FOR SUMMER CLERKING POSITION**

456 Main Street
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

September 1, 2008

Mr. Tremayne A. Employer
Lamp, Light and Sunn
234 Ohio Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Dear Mr. Employer:

I wish to apply for one of your law clerk positions next summer. The four years I spent at Purdue University convinced me that I should practice in central Indiana, and my interest in patent law prompted me to contact you. I obtained your name while doing research for the Giles Sutherland Moot Court Competition.

With a background in electrical engineering, I am seeking a clerkship that will utilize that experience as well as strengthen the skills I have acquired in law school. I will be glad to provide a copy of my paper on _____ that I am preparing for my patent and trademark seminar.

I will be visiting friends in Indianapolis the second weekend in October and will call your office in the hope of scheduling an interview Friday or Monday. Thank you for considering my qualifications.

Sincerely,

Gary P. SecondYear

Enclosure

(See page 18 for more sample sentences.)

EXAMPLE OF LETTER FOR **THIRD YEAR**
ASSOCIATE POSITION APPLICATION

456 Main Street
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

February 14, 2009

Mr. Lewis A. HiringEmployer
Wood, Brick and Mortar
923 Market Street
San Francisco, California 94111

Dear Mr. HiringEmployer:

I understand through our Career Services office that you are seeking an associate to begin work this June. After reviewing the information you provided the office, I was pleased to learn that a substantial amount of your practice involves products liability. I have had some exposure to this area of law and would welcome the opportunity to practice with your firm.

I am writing my third-year seminar paper on _____ and have worked in the law school clinic. Through the clinic, I managed my own caseload, prepared complaints and argued motions. My course work in _____ and _____ may also be of particular interest to you.

I am very interested in associating with your firm and welcome an opportunity to interview with you. I will be in San Francisco over break, March 7-14, and can interview with you at anytime during that week or any other time that may be more convenient for you. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Leigh D. ThirdYear

Enclosure

(See page 18 for more sample sentences.)

APPLYING FOR
FULL-TIME ASSOCIATE POSITION

456 Main Street
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

September 15, 2008

Mr. Anthony T. HiringPartner
Gauge & Pressure
6349 Central Avenue
Sacramento, California 98909

Dear Mr. HiringPartner:

Your firm's involvement in medical malpractice and tort law is of particular interest to me. I wish to be considered for an associate position following graduation from Notre Dame Law School this May.

My concentration during law school has been in litigation and _____ liability. Tort law litigation has been attractive to me since my team won the regional Moot Court competition. Serving on the Moot Court Board has enabled me to further strengthen my skills as I assisted other students in their preparation for competition. The clerkship I held last summer with Dewey, Cheatham and Howe also underscored my interest in medical malpractice and tort law. My degree in nursing and experience at St. Generic Hospital should enable me to provide you assistance in medical malpractice cases.

I plan to visit my parents in Sacramento for a long weekend October 11 through 14, and I would appreciate an opportunity to interview with you during that time. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Erin C. ThirdYear

Enclosure

**EXAMPLE OF LETTER FOR THIRD YEAR
APPLYING FOR AN ASSOCIATE POSITION**

456 Main Street
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

September 1, 2008

Ms. Erika M. Coordinator
Miller & Thompson
1679 Connecticut Avenue
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Ms. Coordinator:

As a third-year law student graduating next May, I wish to apply for an associate position with Miller & Thompson. Communications law is of particular interest to me, and I am extremely impressed with the broad range of your firm's communications practice.

As a member of the Notre Dame Law Review, I published an article concerning the integration of electronic cable-system technology in newspaper publishing. I worked with newspaper and radio productions, both as an undergraduate and law student at Notre Dame University, and in the area of communications law during the summer of 2008 at Johnson & Johnson, LLP.

I will be in Washington from October 10 to October 15 and hope to meet with you then. I will telephone your office the week of September 22 to determine if an interview will be convenient at that time. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Carla A. ThirdYear

Enclosure

(See page 18 for more sample sentences.)

**MAY GRADUATE -- ALREADY TAKEN THE BAR
APPLYING FOR AN ASSOCIATE POSITION**

456 Main St.
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

August 1, 2008

Mr. Jerry A. Jones
Little, Casey & Sunshine
1000 Merchandise Mart
Chicago, Illinois 60606

Dear Mr. Jones:

I recently graduated from Notre Dame Law School in May and took the Illinois Bar Examination in July. I would like to become associated with your firm and have enclosed a resume for your consideration. I am available to clerk while I await my bar results and anticipate being admitted to practice.

The areas of practice that are most interesting to me are labor law and taxation. My degree in accounting enabled me to obtain a clerkship with Benson & Hodges the summer after my first year of law school. On my return to Notre Dame that fall, I began clerking for Phillip & Morris. I gained considerable practical experience in the area of taxation through both clerkships, in addition to researching labor law issues at Phillip & Morris. My law school courses include: _____, _____, and _____.

I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the possibility of a permanent position on your legal staff. Because Notre Dame is in close proximity to Chicago, I can interview at your convenience. Thank you for considering me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Lawrence M. ThirdYear

(See page 18 for more sample sentences.)

First Paragraph -- some beginnings:

- Your article entitled " _____ " published in this month's issue of _____ caught my attention. I was particularly interested in the emphasis you placed on _____.
- You may recall that we met last month at the _____ in _____. We had the opportunity to speak at the reception.
- While talking to _____ about your firm's _____ practice, he suggested that I send you my resume and contact you personally.
- As a life-long resident of Indiana and student of Notre Dame Law School, I have retained strong ties to the state during my employment with _____.
- While discussing career opportunities in the southeast with Professor _____, she discussed your firm and suggested that I contact you directly.
- Professor Rice suggested that I write to you about a clerkship with your firm.
- It recently came to my attention through the law school career services office that you are seeking applications for summer associates.

Second Paragraph -- another approach:

- My experiences include participating in the Moot Court competition and clerking full-time this summer with (firm name).
- After rigorous competition, I was asked to become a member of the Moot Court team. Additionally, clerking for a local law firm has provided valuable experience that will increase my productivity in the future.
- I believe that I possess the unique qualifications to work in your firm.

Third Paragraph -- what next and close:

- Because a resume is merely an overview and cannot adequately represent the individual, I would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss employment opportunities. I look forward to your reply.

Regarding "Less Than Positive" Information:

Do not try to explain "negatives" -- low grades, late application, etc. Any explanation will sound defensive and your cover letter will lose the positive tone it is meant to impart. Instead, ask one of your references to prepare a reference letter that can be included with each application sent. The reference person will be in a better position to present the "negative" in a positive way -- you overcame the challenge or did other things in spite of it.

JUDICIAL CLERKSHIP COVER LETTERS

Judicial clerkship cover letters should be kept brief. The cover letter is simply the conduit for your application materials; allow your application materials to convey your pertinent information. Your cover letter should contain the following information:

- 1) Your status as a student at Notre Dame Law School and your year of graduation.
- 2) The judicial term for which you are applying (e.g. I am writing to apply for a position as a law clerk in your chambers for judicial term 2009/2010).
- 3) The items that are enclosed with the cover letter (e.g., Enclosed please find my resume, transcript, writing sample and a list of references who will provide letters of recommendation under separate cover).
- 4) The names and titles of people that will be sending letters of recommendation on your behalf.
- 5) Your contact information with mailing address, phone number and e-mail address as you would like to discuss your candidacy at an interview scheduled at the judge's convenience.
- 6) If you plan to be in the location of the court on a certain date, this information should also be included in the cover letter.

Above all, you must avoid making any grammatical or typographical errors in your cover letter or in an element of your clerkship application. Additionally:

The Cover Letter & Envelope Address:

Ensure to correctly address your cover letter and envelope with the proper titles and salutation lines. See examples below:

The Honorable Sheila M. O'Brien
Illinois Appellate Court
Room 1906 North
160 North LaSalle Street
Chicago, IL 60601

The Cover Letter salutation:

Always use the appropriate title (e.g., Judge/Justice/Chief Justice) followed by the judge's last name:

Dear Justice O'Brien:

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Informational interviewing is a method for building a professional network, finding a mentor, searching for the right job, and making contacts. Informational interviewing not only provides an avenue to explore career paths, but is a way of discovering at least 50% of the available jobs – jobs that are not advertised.

Informational interviewing is **not** job interviewing. Don't schedule informational interviews with the hidden agenda of a job interview. Most people will see through your plan, and you may not get what you need – cooperation, advice, support and referrals. Some of the reasons for doing informational interviewing given by Martha Stoodley, author of *Information Interviewing*, are:

(30) Establish and/or expand your professional “network,” and

(31) Everyone with whom you establish a contact will also be looking for a job for you if you make a good impression, thank them, communicate openly about your abilities and goals, and stay in contact with them – making your search more efficient.

Informational interviewing is probably one of the most important things you can do for your career, both in the short and long term. You will establish a network with your soon-to-be peers and colleagues that can continue and expand during your entire career.

SAMPLE LETTER
REQUESTING AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

456 Notre Dame Avenue
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

November 1, 2008

Ms. Knowledge Expert
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
841 Chestnut Building
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107

Dear Ms. Expert:

Given your experience with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, I would like to talk with you about career choices and opportunities. As a second-year law student with an undergraduate degree in biology, I wish to direct my legal career toward environmental policy administration. Last summer I clerked for Flowers, Field & Stream in Los Angeles and assisted with the researching and writing of the Orange County water management project.

During the week of November 24, I will be visiting my family for Thanksgiving and would like to meet with you for twenty minutes. On November 7, I will call your office with the hope of scheduling a meeting time. I appreciate your consideration of my request in light of your demanding schedule. I look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely,

Christine E. Student

NOTE: Don't over-extend your welcome. Stick to the length of time you set for the meeting.

LETTER FOR
GATHERING CONTACTS IN THE AREA

456 Notre Dame Avenue
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

December 1, 2008

Ms. Christine E. Contactperson
Bailey, Mickey & Nemo
123 LaSalle Street
Chicago, IL 60604

Dear Ms. Contactperson:

I am seeking your advice. I plan to practice in Chicago after I graduate in 2009 and hope to work in the city next summer. With my background in business, business law has a special attraction to me, and gaining experience and exposure to this area of law is particularly appealing. With your knowledge of the city's legal community and experience in practice, as well as your first-hand knowledge of Notre Dame, any advice you wish to share will be extremely useful.

I will be happy to talk with you in person, by telephone or communicate by e-mail, whichever is more convenient for you. My contact information is included on the resume I am enclosing in the hope that learning my background will be helpful to you.

I welcome an opportunity to talk with you and hope to hear from you soon. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael B. Student

SAMPLE
THANK YOU LETTER

456 Main Street
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

April 12, 2009

Mr. Brian M. HiringPartner
Addison & Clark
6349 Gage Avenue
Sacramento, California 98909

Dear Mr. HiringPartner:

Thank you for interviewing me for a (summer associate, law clerk, or associate) position last Friday. I appreciated the tour of your Sacramento offices and found your description of the firm's practice most informative. The interview served to reinforce my desire to become a (summer associate, law clerk, or member) of Addison & Clark.

I would be pleased to provide any further information to help your firm reach a positive decision concerning my application. Thank you again for your kindness and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Anne M. ThirdYear

SAMPLE
THANK YOU LETTER

456 Main Street
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

October 12, 2008

Mr. Peter F. ContactPerson
Dykstra & Gossard
1987 Grand Avenue
Kalamazoo, Michigan 48909

Dear Mr. ContactPerson:

Thank you for meeting with me last week regarding employment opportunities with your firm. I especially appreciated our discussion on international law and of the legal job market in Kalamazoo. Meeting with (name names) of Dykstra & Gossard reinforced my desire to join your law firm after graduation next May.

I have enclosed a transcript and writing sample for your review. In addition to the references listed on my resume, Professor Eric Smithburn, 574/631-_____, past director of Notre Dame's London Law Program, has indicated he would like to serve as a reference.

Thank you again for your consideration. I look forward to talking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Michelle H. SecondYear

SAMPLE
THANK YOU LETTER

456 Main Street
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

October 12, 2008

Mr. Anthony T. Employer
Lamp, Light and Sunn
234 Ohio Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Dear Mr. Employer:

I enjoyed our meeting on October 10 and wish to thank you and Ms. Sunn for an informative morning. I particularly appreciated learning more about _____ and the opportunity to meet other members of the firm.

I understand that the hiring committee will meet at the end of this month, and I look forward to hearing from you then. I would welcome a (law clerk, permanent associate) position with Lamp, Light and Sunn.

Sincerely,

Erin C. Student

NOTE: A thank you letter can be sent to each attorney with whom you interview IF you are able to make each letter somewhat different by following up on a portion of your conversation or providing additional information that an interviewer wanted. HOWEVER, if all the letters would be the same, send one letter to the person who arranged the interview, frequently the hiring partner, and express thanks to the other people with whom you interviewed -- but name (and spell correctly) all the other people with whom you interviewed or don't attempt to name everyone. A misspelling or another error on a thank you letter can eliminate you from further consideration.

-Optional-

SAMPLE FOLLOW UP LETTER:
NO OFFER ... THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION...

-Optional-

456 Main Street
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

December 15, 2008

Mr. Christopher A. HiringPartner
Gauge & Pressure
6349 Central Avenue
Sacramento, California 98909

Dear Mr. HiringPartner:

Thank you for informing me of your hiring decision. While I regret the lack of an offer at this time, I do understand that you cannot hire an unlimited number of people. I continue to be very interested in working for your firm and ask that you contact me if another opening should occur. I hope Gauge & Pressure has an excellent year, and again, thank you for all the consideration you gave me as an applicant.

Sincerely,

Trish I. SecondYear

NOTE: "Thank you for your consideration" letters are also appropriate in answer to a letter from an employer saying they are sorry, but they cannot make an offer. Use your discretion. Obviously, if you get a form letter from a firm you never met, an answer is not required. But where a relationship had begun (an interview was held), sometimes a letter expressing your regret and your understanding can be a good idea. You never know when an additional opening will occur.

ASKING FOR AN
EXTENSION OF A DEADLINE
REGARDING AN OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT

1. Restate your interest in the employer.
2. Express appreciation for the offer.
3. Indicate that you are considering other employers and ask for an extension of time in order to better evaluate all options.
4. Ask for one week, two weeks, whatever is the minimum (or reasonable) amount of time you need in order to make a decision.
5. When you have decided, immediately inform the employer -- even if it is to decline the employment offer.

DEADLINE EXTENSION REQUEST
REGARDING AN OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT

456 Main Street
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

October 11, 2008

Mr. Marc C. HiringPartner
Miller & Wheat
12 LaSalle Street
Chicago, Illinois 60601

Dear Mr. HiringPartner:

I appreciate your interest in me for a summer associate position. I am delighted to receive your offer of employment and am very interested in working for your firm. However, I am considering other employers at this time and am not prepared to make a final commitment. Understanding that you must make some decisions too, I will make a final decision by November 1 and will communicate that decision to you. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Lewis A. SecondYear

SAMPLE ACCEPTANCE LETTER

456 Main Street
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

November 14, 2008

Ms. Shelby C. Employer
Smythe, Wilson & Brown
551 Market Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Dear Ms. Employer:

This letter confirms my acceptance of your offer to join Smythe, Wilson & Brown as an associate following my graduation in May 2009. I am delighted with the prospect of working with you and look forward to joining the firm. I will contact you before graduation regarding my work schedule and bar examination preparation.

Sincerely,

Carla M. ThirdYear

And to your Network of Contacts...

Thank you for your support during my recent job search. I have accepted a job as _____ at _____.

I sincerely appreciate your help and support.

GUIDELINES FOR ACCEPTING AN OFFER

1. Reflect your enthusiasm for the position.
2. Mention the starting date and other arrangements agreed upon. If no specifics were decided upon in the initial offer, you should indicate that you are looking forward to meeting with them to decide the starting date, etc.

DECLINING AN OFFER

456 Main Street
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

November 14, 2008

Ms. Piper S. Employer
Smythe, Wilson & Brown
551 Market Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Dear Ms. Employer:

This letter confirms our telephone conversation and my decision to decline the offer extended by your firm to become an associate following my graduation from Notre Dame Law School in 2009. I will associate with Wiley and Coyote in Phoenix to pursue my interest in environmental law and litigation.

Thank you for your consideration and patience.

Sincerely,

Kristopher A. ThirdYear

DECLINING AN OFFER

456 Main Street
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556

December 14, 2008

Ms. Michaela M. Employer
Smythe, Wilson & Brown
551 Market Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Dear Ms. Employer:

I am very pleased that you extended an offer of a summer associate position to me. However, after careful review, I have decided to accept another position and must decline your offer of employment for next summer.

(Note: If you have accepted a position in another city, you might mention this. "After thoughtful consideration, I have decided to accept an offer in Los Angeles.")

Thank you for your kindness extended to me during the recruiting process.

Sincerely,

Erin C. SecondYear

Career development plays an important role as you continue through law school. This booklet is dedicated to the goal that each student will seek and obtain rewarding professional objectives.