

Rebecca Myhr Szajna, Esq., L.P.C.
3914 Wild Flower Dr.
Champaign, IL 61822
312-343-1562 · rebecca.szajna@gmail.com

EXPERIENCE

University of Illinois College of Law, Champaign, IL

Director of Legal Externship Program & Lecturer in Law, January 2017 – Present

- Manage University of Illinois College of Law's Legal Externship Program
- Identify, solicit, and build externship opportunities for students
- Develop relationships with externship placements
- Communicate regularly with current and potential externship placements
- Evaluate and train potential externship sponsors
- Counsel students in identifying and obtaining externship positions
- Teach 200+ students each year enrolled in the Externship Courses
- Teach three courses every semester: Fall, Spring, and Summer Terms
- Developed classroom component for three distinct courses: Externship Course, Advanced Externship Course, and Advanced II Externship Course
- Designed original course content and syllabus for each course
- Created Advanced Externship Courses for students completing multiple externships
- Implement student and sponsor feedback to improve Externship Courses and Program
- Revamped Legal Externship Program to meet best practices and ABA standards
- Co-developed and implemented the University of Illinois College of Law's COVID Practicum, Racial Justice Practicum, and Social Justice Practicum
- Created new externship placement partnerships to advance multiple Practicum initiatives
- Manage the University of Illinois College of Law's participation in the Justice John Paul Stevens Foundation Fellowship Program
- Work with the Advancement Team to identify ways donors can support experiential learning at the College of Law
- Work closely with the Office of Career Planning to support students pursuing public interest careers and opportunities

University of Illinois College of Law, Champaign, IL

Adjunct Professor, Fundamentals of Legal Practice, January 2016 – January 2017

- Co-taught mandatory first-year course with Executive Assistant Dean of the Office of Career Planning and Professional Development on the Fundamentals of the Legal Profession, covering a wide range of topics including: client service, business development, professional communications, pro bono and public service, and leadership
- Advocated for development of course and assisted in the creation of the course
- Worked closely with Executive Assistant Dean to develop syllabus and to revise syllabus in the second year of the course
- Developed and taught class on Public Service and Pro Bono within the Legal Profession; asked to return to teach in Spring 2017 semester
- Communicated with alumni and practitioners in the field to serve as guest speakers
- Led small group discussions to facilitate students' understanding of the material
- Reviewed and evaluated final papers and determine students' grades

University of Illinois College of Law, Champaign, IL

Director of Career Planning & Professional Development, February 2011 – Present

- Educated and advised students and alumni on issues related to career planning and professional development

- Counseled and strategized with students and alumni regarding career decisions
- Advised students on successful job search techniques, including how to utilize resources and maximize opportunities
- Reviewed and revised job application materials, including resumes, cover letters, writing samples, personal statements, and professional communications
- Counseled students on interview preparation and conduct mock interviews
- Developed, taught, and facilitated workshops and programs on career-related topics
- Served as leader or significant contributor for all signature programs, including the On-Campus Interviewing Program, Orientation for first year students, the First Look Event, and the Alumni-Student Career Conference
- Consistently counseled more students than any attorney-counselor in the Office
- Counseled numerous students referred by other students and alumni for assistance with career planning and professional development efforts
- Provided advice and counsel to former students who communicate on a regular basis seeking assistance in their continued career development and lateral job searches
- Maintained accurate and extensive records of student interactions for reporting and compliance purposes
- Communicated and met with employers and alumni and collaborate to create career opportunities for current students and alumni
- Served as the College's Public Interest and Government Advisor
- Designed and implemented new public service initiatives, including alumni outreach strategy, public service newsletter, website content, and job search resources
- Developed "Annual Careers in Public Service Evening," held in Chicago every January; managed yearly event
- Served as the University of Illinois College of Law liaison to the public interest and government legal communities across the country, with specific focus on Chicago, Springfield, and Washington D.C. markets
- Worked closely with the Public Interest Law Initiative to facilitate opportunities for Illinois Law students in the Chicago public interest legal community
- Participated in the leadership and management of the Midwest Public Interest Law Career Conference, the largest public interest job fair in the Midwest, along with colleagues from Northwestern and Notre Dame
- Managed, along with Executive Assistant Dean, the College of Law Fellowship Program
- Developed Career Advising Assistants Program; hired and managed third year law students to assist with Office projects
- Assisted Executive Assistant Dean in the management of day-to-day operations of the Office of Career Planning and Professional Development and provide leadership in areas of strategic focus
- Promoted from Associate Director within two years

University of Illinois College of Law, Champaign, IL

Adjunct Professor, The American Jury, January 2013 – May 2013

- Taught course on the American jury system
- Reviewed potential casebooks and selected casebook for course
- Created syllabus and weekly lessons
- Covered numerous topics, including the history of the jury, the empirical study of juries, jury selection, juror information processing, civil and criminal juries, jury reform, and comparative jury systems
- Reviewed and evaluated weekly reflection papers and provided feedback
- Evaluated students' class participation and understanding of the material

- Graded final papers and assigned grades to each student for the course

Clarity Partners, LLC, Chicago, IL

Trial Consultant, July 2009 - Present

- Conduct mock trials and focus groups designed to test case themes for clients facing litigation
- Meet with clients and discuss substantive legal issues and facts in pending or potential litigation
- Design research exercises to explore and test legal issues, facts, and case theories
- Lead focus group discussions
- Evaluate surrogate juror opinions on key issues in litigation
- Review and analyze results of juror research
- Draft client reports analyzing juror research exercises
- Advise and counsel clients on recommended case strategies

Mental Wealth Consulting, Chicago, IL

Mental Health Consultant, July 2008 – February 2011

- Founded mental health and well-being consulting firm
- Counseled attorneys on personal and professional development

Burke, Warren, MacKay & Serritella, Chicago, IL

Contract Attorney, July 2007 – May 2010

- Analyzed & prepared documents for large-scale document production in mass mediation of clergy sexual misconduct claims
- Asked to return to firm while in graduate school and manage special projects

Burke, Warren, MacKay & Serritella, Chicago, IL

Litigation Associate, March 2006 – October 2006

- Managed cases at various stages in litigation and mediation
- Argued motions before the court
- Drafted motions to dismiss, motions for summary judgment, memoranda, discovery, correspondence, and mediation summaries
- Prepared and defended expert witness depositions
- Reviewed legislation and counseled clients on legislative issues

Office of the State Appellate Defender, Chicago, IL

Assistant Defender, May 2004 – February 2006

- Represented indigent defendants on criminal appeals
- Counseled clients regarding appeals
- Reviewed trial transcripts, researched law & analyzed potential issues for appeal
- Drafted appellate briefs
- Successfully argued appeal for wrongly-convicted client and won rare, outright prison release

Gardner Carton & Douglas LLP, Chicago, IL

Litigation Associate, September 2002 - April 2004

- Drafted federal and state pleadings, appellate briefs, substantive motions, settlement agreements, discovery requests and responses, deposition questions, and correspondence
- Litigated cases involving breach of contract, fraud, securities, tortious interference, employment discrimination, antitrust, arbitration, bankruptcy, constitutional issues, and jurisdictional disputes
- Tasked with advanced level work as junior associate
- Worked as Summer Associate, May-August 2000

Sidley Austin Brown & Wood LLP, Chicago, IL

Summer Associate, May 2001 - August 2001

- Received offer of employment upon graduation from law school

EDUCATION

Stanford Law School, Palo Alto, CA

Juris Doctor, May 2002

- *Stanford Law and Policy Review*, Lead Articles Editor
- East Palo Alto Community Law Project, Intake Volunteer
- Stanford Law 1L Orientation, Orientation Leader

Illinois School of Professional Psychology, Chicago, IL

Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology, July 2008

- Completed master's practicum providing counseling to adults at Claret Center, Chicago, IL

Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ

*Bachelor of Science in Psychology, **summa cum laude**, May 1999*

- Minors in Business and Mass Communication
- Phi Beta Kappa
- National Dean's List
- Arizona State University Dean's List
- Arizona Board of Regent's Scholar
- Received a four-year, full-tuition scholarship

LICENSES & CERTIFICATIONS

- State of Illinois Bar, 2002 (Active)
- Licensed Professional Counselor, State of Illinois, 2004
- MBTI® (Myers-Briggs) Certification, 2015

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

- Sixth Judicial Circuit Pro Bono Committee, Committee Member
- Public Interest Law Initiative Law School Roundtable, Panelist, 2015

MEMBERSHIPS

- American Bar Association, Member
- National Association for Law Placement, Member
- Chicago Area Law School Consortium, Member

PUBLICATIONS

- Rebecca Myhr Szajna, *Surrendering your Smartphone at the Courthouse Door: Addressing the Rise of Technology-Related Juror Misconduct*, J. L., TECH. & POL'Y, TIMELY TECH (2013).