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DA Swears-In Legal Research Assistants



District Attorney Jan Scully announced the swearing-in of nine legal research assistants (LRAs), all of whom chose to work for the office without promise of pay or employment.

After two years of budget cuts, the District Attorney's Office lost 20% of its general fund attorney positions. County funds for attorneys to prosecute homicides, gang cases, sexual assaults, robberies, burglaries, and many other crimes, including misdemeanors, have decreased.

In August 2010, Charles Bruce, Alice Cheng, Megan Eixenberger, TeriAnn Grimes, Lori Grogan, Stephanie Maroun, Mauro Quintero, Robert Romero and Alan Serrano became the first group of volunteer post Bar LRAs. They each worked without certainty of employment and without pay from August until November, which is when they started getting paid. A majority of them also worked for the office as volunteer interns for a year or longer while in law school.

As volunteer LRAs, they were assigned to various positions and units conducting in-court arraignments, pretrial negotiations and calendar duties, as well as research and writing assignments to assist deputy district attorneys. Their assistance helped to fill attorney resource gaps throughout the office, especially in the misdemeanor unit which has been the most impacted by budget cuts. Sworn in as deputies, but classified as LRAs, they now prosecute cases in the misdemeanor unit.

DA Jan Scully states, "The dedication shown by these individuals is a testament to their unwavering commitment to serve the Sacramento community and seek justice. I commend them for their service to our office and contribution to public safety in budget critical times."

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“I’m originally from Merced County and came to Sacramento from Drexel University, Earle Mack School of Law in Philadelphia to work as an LRA because I wanted to be close to home and work with great attorneys. Even though we weren’t being paid, I knew I was getting valuable experience that would make me a better attorney. I am grateful to be part of this team and I look forward to continuing my journey here.” – **Charles Bruce**

“It was tough coming into a situation where you knew you would be working hard, for long hours and without pay, but you cannot place a dollar amount on the experience. In this economy, many graduates could not even get jobs volunteering, so I’m glad I had this opportunity to start my legal career here.” – **Alice Cheng**

“Over the last two years, this office has become a second family to me. I get to wake up everyday excited to go to work. I get to do the best, most rewarding job I know of and I get to do it with the help of the greatest people. I would not trade this experience for anything.” – **Stephanie Maroun**

“Having worked in this office for some time, I knew the importance of contributing and offering help. When I was asked to volunteer, I did not hesitate. With the support of my family and everyone in the office, we were able to accomplish a great deal and the experience that we received is invaluable.” – **Mauro Quintero**

“It has been a rewarding experience working for this office so far. I am honored by the opportunity to represent this office in the courtroom.” – **Robert Romero**

“I have worked at the DA’s Office since January 2009 and I have seen first hand how budget cuts have impacted the office. As workloads increased and resources decreased, I was impressed by how the office remained positive and dedicated. While I had offers to work elsewhere, I took this position because I felt it was important to work at a place where people were doing the right thing. Taking this job without guarantee of compensation was definitely scary, but the experience of working here has made it all worthwhile.” – **Alan Serrano**