

SAMPLE LETTERS FOR LAW STUDENTS

- Cover Letter Information
- Law Firm Clerkship Inquiries
- Responses to Career Services Job Postings
- Request for Informational Interview
- Associate Inquiry
- Letter to USC Alumni Outside South Carolina
- Unsolicited Mailing
- Public Interest Inquiry
- Judicial Clerkship Inquiries
- Reaffirming Interest
- Thank You Notes
- Letters in Response to Offers
- Acknowledging Offer
- Accepting Offer
- Declining Offer
- Withdrawing from Consideration

IMPORTANT NOTE

The letters in this packet are samples only. They should be customized to meet your particular needs and style and to include information pertinent to the particular employer. Remember that many students will use this packet; employers who receive very similar letters from several students will not be impressed favorably.

Look at the entire packet. Although a particular letter may be labeled for one purpose, you may find language that you can use for a different inquiry. **THE LABELS ARE FOR YOUR INFORMATION, DO NOT SEND A COVER LETTER WITH A HEADING IDENTIFYING THE KIND OF LETTER.**

Please notify the Office of Career Services if you find errors in this material. We do not want to perpetuate mistakes!

THE COVER LETTER

When the resume is mailed directly to a prospective employer, whether in response to a specific job notice on the bulletin board or as an unsolicited request for an interview, it must be accompanied by a cover letter. (Do not include a cover letter with resumes submitted to employers interviewing on-campus unless the employer specifically requests a letter.) **The importance of the cover letter cannot be over-emphasized.**

1. It demonstrates the applicant's interest in the employer.
2. It gives the applicant an opportunity to highlight important points in the resume and to stress particular aspects of his/her background that might be important.
3. It shows the ability to write a good business letter (an important aspect of office work).

In fact, many employers look at the cover letter as a writing sample. Remember, the content of the letter should fit the employer to whom the resume is sent. A cover letter general enough to be sent to all employers is likely to elicit a response from none.

COVER LETTER PREPARATION

The letter should be typed in black on high quality 8 1/2" X 11" business stationery (white, off-white or cream), preferably matching your resume paper. To the extent possible, center the letter between the top and bottom of the page. As with the resume, a typographical or grammatical error will probably eliminate any chance for serious consideration.

When sending out several resumes as part of an unsolicited mail campaign, you must reproduce each cover letter individually. A good form can be drawn up leaving space for insertion of person's name, firm name, city, state, zip code, salutation, and other general information and then merged with a targeted mailing list. However, **a more effective letter will also provide for changes based upon your knowledge of the particular employer.**

The letter should be addressed to an individual member of the organization by name, i.e., the law firm's hiring partner or recruiting coordinator or the corporation's or the government agency's general counsel. These names are usually available in the Office of Career Services or through the Internet. If these materials are unavailable, the student may telephone the employer's office and ask the operator for the name of the person responsible for hiring. If an alumnus/alumnae from USC or your undergraduate school is a partner in a law firm or an attorney in the general counsel's office of a corporation or agency, the letter and a resume should be sent to him/her. Presumably, that person will forward the application to the appropriate person if he/she is not authorized to act upon it.

You will be wasting your time sending letters to the attention of the "Hiring Partner" or "Hiring Committee" for a law firm or the "General Counsel" or "Legal Department" for corporations and government agencies. A cover letter addressed this way will make clear that this is a mass mailing and that you know little about the particular organization.

If you are sending a cold letter, it is often a good idea to ask simply for advice or for a meeting, rather than asking directly for a job. Informational interviews can lead to later job offers or to other leads.

CONTENT OF COVER LETTER

I. Forms of Address

If you are writing to an attorney, use the attorney's name, followed by "Esquire" in the inside address and on the envelope. The salutation should be "Dear Mr. _____" or "Dear Ms. _____" followed by a colon (:) not a comma. For some employers, the appropriate contact person will be a staff person who is not an attorney. In that situation, use "Mr." or "Ms." before the name on the envelope and on the inside address, and do not use "Esquire."

In applying for judicial clerkships, the salutation for members of a Supreme Court is "Dear Justice _____" and for the other courts is "Dear Judge _____." The inside address and envelope addresses are "The Honorable [full name]_."

II. Opening Paragraph

The style of the letter should be straightforward, without flowery language and complex sentences. The letter should open with a brief statement of the reason why the student is contacting that particular employer. The letter should then demonstrate how the applicant's credentials meet the employer's needs. References to the relevant portions of the resume are appropriate, i.e., prior experience in the field, transferable skills, and related law school or other course work. If the student is sending individualized letters to several different types of employers, it will be possible to stress different points depending on the type of employer involved. Be sure to mention geographic ties if applicable.

Sample Opening Sentences

1. At the suggestion of Professor Joshua Eagle, I am writing to you concerning a possible associate position with your firm. I am currently a third-year student at the University of South Carolina School of Law and will graduate in May 20__.
2. I am a third-year student at the University of South Carolina School of Law and am very interested in the associate position you recently listed with the Office of Career Services.
3. As a second-year student at the University of South Carolina School of Law, I am seeking a position as a summer associate for 20__. Your firm has been highly recommended by _____, who clerked for you last semester.
4. Upon graduation from the University of South Carolina School of Law in May 20__, I plan to return to my hometown of Chicago. My resume is enclosed. I am very interested in a position as an associate with [name of firm].
5. Joe Smith has told me that you are the best family law lawyer he knows. As a first-year student, I am exploring various careers in the law and I have a particular interest in family law. Would it be possible for me to meet with you to hear more about the practice area and to get your advice?

III. Content Paragraph(s)

You should not feel constrained by the contents of your resume. If, for example, the resume is generalized in its approach, but you want to stress your qualifications for a specialized area such as patents, admiralty, estate planning, or tax, you may want to give a more elaborate picture of your background in this area by mentioning relevant law school course work. If you earned good grades in such courses, you should mention this.

IV. Closing Paragraph

The letter should always close with a request for an interview or a meeting. If the employer is some distance away, it is often helpful to say that you are planning to be in that city during a certain week and request an appointment at the employer's convenience. When you are applying to a geographically distant employer, it is also helpful to point out prior contact with the area, if any, especially if the resume does not indicate any ties with the region.

Possibly in the closing paragraph, but better still in the first paragraph, it is often helpful to indicate that you would like to meet with the employer even if they are not hiring at this time. Small firms, especially, tend to hire when they meet someone who seems to "fit." They are reluctant to say that they are hiring. Sample sentences:

1. Even if you do not know your hiring needs for next fall, I would appreciate the opportunity to talk to you about the real estate practice in Atlanta.
2. Even if you are not hiring at this time, I would like the opportunity to meet you. I will be moving to XXX and would like to meet some of my future colleagues in the bar.
3. Your posting on the Career Services website shows that you are looking for someone who has already passed the South Carolina bar. Although I will not take the bar exam until July, I would like the chance to meet you so that you will know me in case you do not find the more experienced person you are seeking.
4. Although you may have filled your needs for law clerks for summer 20__, I would like to meet you to talk about possibilities for the future.

V. Follow-Up

Nationally, most Career Services professionals believe that thank you notes are not required for first interviews on-campus. However, they are a nice touch and are important to some interviewers. If you are going to send thank you notes, you must do so promptly, since most interviewers make quick decisions. Be sure that you have spelled the name(s) of the interviewer(s) correctly and have made no grammar or spelling errors. **Thank you e-mails are acceptable but only for OCI's.** If you get a callback or interview at any office, you should definitely send a thank you note. If not sending via email, use plain folded notes and hand written in blue or black ink, or type the thank you letter in business letter form.

A follow-up telephone call, two or three weeks after sending the initial letter, gives the applicant a certain amount of control over the situation. You will find out whether an interview will be scheduled, without sitting by the phone or mailbox wondering whether any response at all will be forthcoming. A follow-up call also demonstrates real interest in the employer, suggesting to the

employer that he was not just another name on a long mailing list. Furthermore, this approach suggests that the applicant is politely aggressive – a desirable trait for most attorneys. Follow-up calls may not be desirable or practical for every application, so this technique should be reserved for employers in whom you have an intense interest. You may also choose to talk to the secretary or assistant of the lawyer to whom you wrote.

Follow-up letters or emails are an alternative means of making inquiry as to the status of the application if no response has been forthcoming. One advantage of email is the ease of reply; an employer is less likely to set it aside for later response.

You should keep track of all employers to whom you have sent letters and resumes, including names, dates, responses, and results of interviews, to avoid confusion, duplication, and possible embarrassment. Do not be offended if you do not get a response to your letter, particularly if you have not written in response to a job posting. A lawyer's priority must be client problems, rather than answering what may be a large number of application letters.

You may want to have your letters reviewed or reviewed by the Office of Career Services. It certainly is good practice to have someone with a fresh eye review letters for any typographical errors as well as content. Please stop by the Office of Career Services, or set up an meeting time via Symplicity [Counseling] or telephone at 803-777-8479.

INSTRUCTIONAL COVER LETTER

Your Address
City, State, Zip Code
Date

Name of Attorney, Esquire
Name of Employer
Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr. _____: (or Ms. _____:)

FIRST PARAGRAPH – Introductory

Explain why you are writing, name the position for which you are applying, and tell how you heard of the opening.

- If you are writing to someone who is a friend of a friend, indicate that he/she suggested you to write.
- If you happened to meet an attorney and received his/her card, refresh his/her memory as to the circumstances of your meeting.
- If you are writing to an alumnus, indicate who suggested that you write, or state that you will graduate from the alum's school.

SECOND PARAGRAPH – Express Interest*

Indicate why you are interested in working for this **particular** employer. Demonstrate that you have done research on the employer and let them know you are interested in the areas of law that they practice. If possible, include something which could only be said to this employer.

THIRD PARAGRAPH – Establish Your Value

- Point out experiences and particular achievements that make you an outstanding or solid candidate.
- You may refer briefly to the attached resume for amplification. Do not restate your entire resume.
- You may also include information which is not on your resume but is relevant to the position for which you are applying.
- It is extremely important that your cover letter be positive in content. Avoid any negative reference. You want to portray yourself as a positive, confident individual.

*Info in paragraph two may be combined with either paragraph one or paragraph three.

FOURTH PARAGRAPH – Appropriate Closing that Paves the Way for an Interview and a Statement of Your Method of Follow-up

If the employer is out of town, indicate that you will be in the employer's city or geographic area during a particular time and you would like to arrange a meeting. Indicate that you are willing to meet at their convenience or suggest a time by briefly explaining your schedule and/or where and when you can be reached. Conclude with a statement such as: "Thank you for your assistance in this matter" or "Thank you for your time and consideration."

Sincerely, / Very truly yours,

Signature
Typewritten Name

Enclosure

FIRM CLERKSHIP INQUIRY

100 Arbor Place
Columbia, SC 29201
January 10, 20__

William H. Green, Esquire
Smith, Green, Jones & Baldwin
P.O. Box 123
Columbia, SC 29202

Dear Mr. Green:

I am a first-year student at the University of South Carolina School of Law and am interested in working as a law clerk with your firm next summer. I am eager for exposure to the practical side of law practice. Several second-year students have told me that Smith Green offers very good hands-on experience.

As you can see from my resume, I graduated from Furman University with a degree in English. In addition to my efficient research methods and excellent writing skills, I also possess strong interpersonal skills, as shown by the many leadership positions I held as an undergraduate. As a student assistant in the Student Affairs Office at Furman University, I assisted with a university-wide survey and received a recommendation from the Dean of Students for my work on this project. My resume and reference list are enclosed for your review.

I would appreciate an opportunity to interview with you. I can be reached at (803) 555-8888 or via email at Christine.Jones@gmail.com to discuss the possibility of a meeting. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Christine A. Jones

Enclosures

FIRM CLERKSHIP INQUIRY

52 Adger Road
Columbia, SC 29204
December 1, 20__

Diane J. Rhodes, Esq.
Eller, Rhodes and Gray
3444 East Bay Street
Charleston, SC 29401

Dear Ms. Rhodes:

As a second-year student at the University of South Carolina School of Law, I am pursuing opportunities for a 20__ summer clerkship in Charleston and am enclosing my resume for your consideration. I intend to return to my hometown of Charleston to establish my legal career, and I am particularly interested in Eller, Rhodes and Gray because of its location and its strong business practice.

My undergraduate liberal arts education at the University of South Carolina and my coursework in law school have emphasized research and writing. I have recently taken Corporations and Securities Law courses and am now particularly interested in business law. I noted that your firm's clients include Bank of America and Weyerhaeuser Corporation. This information, coupled with your work in litigation, tax, and commercial law, has led to my interest in the firm.

I plan to be home from December 14 through January 1 and would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you regarding employment opportunities. Even if you do not know your hiring plans for the summer, I would like the chance to talk to you about your commercial law practice. I may be reached at (803) 345-6789 or via email at ElliottJMcGee@yahoo.com. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Elliott J. McGee

Enclosure

FIRM CLERKSHIP INQUIRY

101 Maple Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29205
March 6, 20__

Charles B. Goode, Jr., Esquire
Goode, Best & Superior
1001 S. Main Street
Beaufort, SC 29901

Dear Mr. Goode:

Mr. David Brown, of Brown, Cook, Jacobs, Meyers & Smith, knowing of my interest in medical malpractice, has suggested that I write to you concerning a summer clerkship with your firm. My resume is enclosed for your consideration.

My interest in medical malpractice law is evidenced by my undergraduate degree in nursing, my past work experience, and my selection of law courses. I recently completed Professor Wilson's Biomedical Ethics Seminar and have also taken the basic Health Law course. Mr. Brown has recommended Goode, Best & Superior's clerkship program to me for its broad range of exposure to both private and public health care clients. I would appreciate the opportunity to continue to develop professional skills with your firm.

I look forward to hearing from you and would welcome a chance to meet with you at your convenience. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,



Joseph K. Harriman

Enclosure

FIRM CLERKSHIP INQUIRY

333 Falling Springs Road
Columbia, SC 29210
March 1, 20__

Loretta C. Cee, Esquire
Loretta Cee and Associates
P.O. Box 1212
Columbia, SC 29206

Dear Ms. Cee:

I am a first-year student at the University of South Carolina School of Law and would like an opportunity to clerk for you this summer. I am very eager to gain practical experience and would be willing to work on a part-time or individual project basis if you do not need a full-time clerk.

I am particularly interested in working for a general practice firm such as yours. I know that you primarily handle plaintiff's personal injury cases, family law, and some criminal matters. These areas appeal to me, because I like the idea of helping individuals.

I am well organized, a quick-learner, and I am eager to assume responsibility. As you can see from my enclosed resume, I have experience working in small offices. Even if you do not plan to hire a clerk this summer, I would like to meet you and to learn more about your practice.

Thank you for your consideration. I welcome the opportunity to speak with you and may be reached via email at JoannaJacobs@outlook.com or by telephone at (803) 989-9988.

Sincerely,



Joanna Jacobs

Enclosure

RESPONSE TO CAREER SERVICES JOB POSTING

100 St. Andrews Road, Apt. 2B
Columbia, South Carolina 29210
May 5, 20__

Ms. Jane Smith
Recruiting Coordinator
Macon, Smith, Green & Gillespie
P.O. Box 15
Greenville, SC 29671

Dear Ms. Smith:

As a former bank manager with three years of experience, I was pleased to note your job posting, at the University of South Carolina School of Law, for an associate in the area of commercial law. I am enclosing my resume for your review.

During my law school studies, I have selected courses which reflect my strong interest in this area, such as Commercial Law, Bankruptcy, and Corporate Finance. My work as a law clerk during the summers of 20__ and 20__ provided me with broad exposure to a variety of issues in business transactions, including creditors' rights. I have found commercial law to be of great interest and look forward to the challenge of practice.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss my qualifications with you and look forward to hearing from you. If you would like to schedule a meeting or if I may provide you with any additional information, please contact me at (803) 878-9988 or MTS@aol.com. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Mary T. Sloan

Enclosure

RESPONSE TO CAREER SERVICES LISTING

3126 Lincoln Avenue
Columbia, SC 29266
March 15, 20__

John E. Jones, Esquire
Jones Law Firm
252 Hampton Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Mr. Jones:

I am writing concerning your job posting on the law school website. I realize that you are looking for someone who is already a member of the South Carolina bar and ready to try cases. Although I have not been admitted to the bar, I would like the opportunity to meet with you. My past experience as an insurance adjuster and my law school coursework concentrating on litigation make me an ideal candidate for this position. While I understand your goal is to hire immediately, I hope that you might consider me if you do not find the right person by the time I pass the bar. I have enclosed my resume for your review.

I will graduate from the law school this May and am registered to take the South Carolina bar exam in July. I have already completed my Rule 403 requirements. I have also worked at a small firm with a strong focus on representing injured individuals and am familiar with a personal injury practice.

I do not have classes on Friday afternoons and would like the chance to stop in to see you if you have time available. Please call ((803)444-5678) or email (WTBensler@gmail.com) me at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



William T. Bensler

Enclosure

REQUEST FOR INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

20103 Kenyon Drive
Columbia, SC 29209
February 25, 20__

John Q. Phillips, Esquire
Phillips & Phillips, P.A.
P.O. Box 11212
Columbia, SC 29211

Dear Mr. Phillips:

My neighbor, Bill Edwards, suggested you as an ideal person to provide me information about family law. I am a second-year student at the University of South Carolina School of Law and am exploring career options. Mr. Edwards spoke very highly of you and your firm's reputation.

Although I am not yet sure of my ultimate practice area, I am seriously considering family law. Last semester, I particularly enjoyed my Family Practice class. I had also worked as a counselor prior to law school, and the people-oriented aspect of domestic practice appeals to me.

Would you be willing to talk to me about your practice? I would appreciate a realistic view of family law and any advice or suggestions you may have for me.

I will call your office next week to find out if there is a time when we might meet. Thank you very much for considering this request.

Sincerely,



Daniel P. Taylor

REQUEST FOR INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

123 Greene Street
Columbia, SC 29205
January 1, 20__

Linda Jones, Esquire
Legal Aid for South Carolina
321 Main Street
Columbia, SC 29205

Dear Ms. Jones:

I am a student at the University of South Carolina School of Law and am interested in working for an organization that serves the public.

John Williams, the director of XXXXXX, suggested I contact you to discuss your practice. He tells me you have an outstanding reputation and extensive experience in public assistance. I understand that you are not hiring, but I would like to meet with you to discuss your practice and organization. I would appreciate any general advice or information you can offer me as I explore public sector opportunities in the Columbia area.

I would be very grateful for the opportunity to meet with you for 10 to 15 minutes. Alternatively, if you are unable to meet with me in person, I would like to correspond with you by phone or email in the near future. My phone number is (803) 345-6543, and my email address is JSmith@outlook.com. Thank you for time.

Sincerely,



James Smith

ASSOCIATE INQUIRY

2030 Dunbarton Circle
Columbia, SC 29204
December 19, 20__

John Q. Grayson, Esquire
Merry, Grayson & Ives
500 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 21301

Dear Mr. Grayson:

As a third-year student intending to move to Washington, DC to practice environmental law, I am interested in an associate position with Merry, Grayson & Ives. Enclosed is my resume for your review.

Both my education and work experience indicate my interest in environmental law. A summer clerkship with the Environmental Protection Agency in Atlanta, Georgia and work on the *South Carolina Environmental Law Journal* has broadened my interest in and knowledge of environmental issues. I have also taken all the environmental law classes offered at the law school. Merry, Grayson & Ives has a national reputation in this field, which is the reason for my particular interest in your firm.

I plan to be in the Washington, DC area during the week of January 15, 20__ and would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you. I will telephone your office two weeks prior to my visit to see if there would be a convenient time for us to meet.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,



Jason L. Snyder

Enclosure

LETTER TO USC ALUMNI OUT-OF-STATE

742 E. Main Street
Columbia, SC 29222
March 23, 20__

Marilyn Grey, Esquire
Smith, Hones & Smith, LLC
111 First Street
New York, NY 09999

Dear Ms. Grey:

After graduating from the University of South Carolina School of Law in May 20__, I am planning to relocate to New York City. I am hoping that, as a fellow USC School of Law graduate, you can provide some guidance about the New York City legal market. I will most likely be looking for positions at firms smaller than yours, but any suggestions for my job search would be greatly appreciated. I will be in New York visiting friends the week of April 25. Would it be possible for me to stop in to see you some time during that week?

[ADD INFORMATION ABOUT SELF HERE] I have enclosed my resume for your review.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter. I hope to hear from you soon. I can be reached by email at xxxxxxxx@aol.com or by phone at 803-000-0000.

Sincerely,



Janice Brown

Enclosure

UNSOLICITED MAILING

1220 Sandy Hill Point
Columbia, SC 29205
September 21, 20__

Lawton Briefs, Esquire
Briefs, Jones & Brothers, LLP
1500 Success Lane
Greenville, SC 29605

Dear Mr. Briefs:

As my law school career concludes, I am seeking to begin my legal career as a litigator in family law. In particular I am interested in working for a firm such as yours. I have read about your firm in the *Family Law Journal* and am very enthusiastic about your rapidly expanding domestic law practice.

As a member of the USC School of Law Moot Court Bar, I have argued successfully in trial competitions. In addition, I have clerked during my second and third years at Sardos Sardos and Parlor in Columbia, SC where I have been involved directly with many family law cases. Also, I have taken all the family law courses offered at the law school. My education and experiences have broadened my interest in and knowledge of family law.

Even if you have not yet determined your hiring needs, I would appreciate the opportunity to speak with you regarding the possibility of future positions. Enclosed is my resume for your review. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Sam Snow

Enclosure

PUBLIC INTEREST LETTER

78900 Bleeker Street
West Columbia, SC 29255
February 17, 20__

Adam Bell, Esq.
Legal Aid of Atlanta
669 Peachtree Street NW
Atlanta, Georgia 30308

Dear Mr. Bell:

Please consider me for a position with Legal Aid of Atlanta this summer. The opportunity to provide indigent clients with fair and equal representation is very appealing to me. I have family in Atlanta and am interested in practicing law there after graduation.

In my first three semesters at the University of South Carolina School of Law, I have been very active in the Public Interest Law Society. Our law school's Pro Bono program has provided me the chance to work with disadvantaged children and with the local food bank. The more involved I became in pro bono activities, the more interested I became in a long-term career helping those in need.

My enclosed resume demonstrates my commitment to public service as well as to litigation. I will be in Atlanta the week of March 15 and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss a possible summer position and to obtain any advice you may have for me. I may be reached via email at MCC@yahoo.com. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Mary Cheshire

Enclosure

**SAMPLE BASIC COVER LETTER FOR FEDERAL JUDGES DURING THE FEDERAL
HIRING PLAN SEASON – OSCAR**

2526 W. Oak Street
Columbia, SC 29205
June 6, 2012

The Honorable Franklin Rodgers
U.S. District Court Judge
District of South Carolina
Robert Manning U.S. Courthouse
1400 Block Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Judge Rodgers:

I am a third-year student at the University of South Carolina School of Law and I am writing to apply for a clerkship in your chambers for the 2013-2014 term. Attached please find a resume, law school transcript, and writing sample for your review. In addition, letters of recommendation from University of South Carolina School of Law Professors Jennings, Kane and Quo are attached.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,



Taylor Duncan

Attachments

SAMPLE COMPREHENSIVE COVER LETTER – JUDICIAL CLERKSHIP

2526 W. Oak Street
Columbia, SC 29205

June 6, 20__

The Honorable Franklin Rodgers
U.S. District Court Judge
District of South Carolina
Robert Manning U.S. Courthouse
1400 Block Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Judge Rodgers:

I am a second-year student at the University of South Carolina School of Law and I am writing to apply for a clerkship in your chambers for the 2015-2016 term. I was born and raised in South Carolina and I am planning on remaining in South Carolina to begin my legal career. In addition, after speaking with Matthew McNichol, a USC alumnus, about his clerkship experience in your chambers, I believe that my background and experiences make me the ideal candidate for this position.

My long term goal is to become an Assistant United States Attorney and my law school course selection reflects many classes that I believe would be beneficial in a trial court setting including evidence, jurisdiction, two semesters of criminal procedure and advanced legal writing. Furthermore, over the past two years I have worked to refine my legal research and writing skills. During my first half of the summer, I was an intern in the chambers of the Judge Irving Tate of the South Carolina Court of Appeals. This position provided me with the opportunity to prepare bench memoranda and drafts of opinions, as well as closely observe court proceedings. I also participated in conferences with Judge Tate and his clerks. During the second half of the summer, I worked as a summer associate at Walden and Rooney, where I researched state and federal law and prepared drafts of discover and dispositive motions. In addition, I am a member of the South Carolina Law Review and am working on a note that is scheduled for publication in fall 2012.

I have enclosed my resume, law school transcript and writing sample for your review. Letters of recommendation from University of South Carolina School of Law Professors Hopkins [Hopkins@usc.edu], Lee [lee@usc.edu] and Parreira [parreira@usc.edu] will be forthcoming under separate cover. In addition, Judge Tate has agreed to provide a verbal reference for me and can be reached at 803.777.7777.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,



Taylor Duncan

Enclosures

**SAMPLE COVER LETTER DRAFTED BY AN ALUMNUS APPLICANT
JUDICIAL CLERKSHIP**

4711 Chalmers Drive
Columbia, SC 29205

June 6, 20__

The Honorable Joyce Carrington
U.S. District Court Judge
District of South Carolina
Robert Manning U.S. Courthouse
901 W. Washington Street
Greenville, SC 29601

Dear Judge Carrington:

I am a 2009 graduate of the University of South Carolina School of Law and am writing to apply for a clerkship in your chambers. Currently, I am serving as a Fellow at the Southern Poverty Law Center until [date] and through this position I am involved in federal cases in several states. During my fellowship, I have had the opportunity to engage in a significant amount of legal research and analytical writing. In addition, I have had the opportunity to enhance my practical knowledge of civil and criminal procedure, as well as a variety of constitutional issues. I believe that my experience would be of great benefit to your chambers.

I have enclosed a resume, law school transcript, list of references and writing sample. Under separate cover, you will receive letters of recommendation from Professors Mahler, Zuegler and Associate Director H. Louis Pirezzi, who has been my immediate supervisor at the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Thank you for your consideration. I would welcome the opportunity to interview with you, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Beth Hardacre

Enclosures

STATE TRIAL JUDICIAL CLERKSHIP INQUIRY

859 Planters Drive
Columbia, SC 29209
September 15, 20__

The Honorable Susan F. Campbell
Circuit Court Judge
Tenth Judicial Circuit
P.O. Box 1234
Anderson, SC 29229

Dear Judge Campbell:

As a third-year student at the University of South Carolina School of Law, I am interested in working for you as a judicial clerk after my graduation in May 20__. I have enclosed my resume for your consideration.

I am a member of the ABA Moot Court team and plan to become a litigator. Having the opportunity to observe attorneys at trial and to learn from your experience would definitely help me toward this goal. Because I would like to practice in the upstate, it would be particularly useful for me to become familiar with the court personnel and the attorneys in the area.

I believe I would be an asset to you as your law clerk. My hard work and ability to get along well with others is evidenced by the leadership positions which appear on my resume. Working for Professor Morgan has enabled me to develop my research and writing skills. I understand the travel required of a clerk in the South Carolina Circuit Court and have no obligations that would interfere with this.

I would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you at your convenience. If you are not considering clerks at this time, I will be happy to reapply at a later date. If I may provide you with any additional documentation to assist you with your decision, please contact me at (803)878-8877 or DBM@law.sc.edu.

Sincerely,



Dianne Bates Martin

Enclosure

STATE APPELLATE JUDICIAL CLERKSHIP INQUIRY

1600 Berkley Drive, Apt. C-5
Columbia, SC 29211
October 28, 20__

The Honorable Thomas Q. Smith
Rhode Island Supreme Court
P.O. Box 2222
Big City, Rhode Island 15216

Dear Justice Smith:

Enclosed please find my resume, law school transcript, list of references, and writing sample for your consideration. After completing my studies at the University of South Carolina School of Law next spring, I plan to relocate to Rhode Island. I am very interested in the possibility of clerking for you.

As you can see from my resume, I have a great deal of research and writing experience. I have been a member of the South Carolina Law Review and have also worked as a research assistant for Professor Appel. Prior to attending law school, I was an English teacher for six years. I enjoy the intellectual challenge of legal research, and believe that I also have a practical grasp of time management which allows me to complete tasks efficiently.

I will be in Rhode Island during my spring break, March 10-15. Would it be possible to meet with you at that time? If that is not convenient, I am also willing to schedule a trip for a date when you are available. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Andrew S. Lee

Enclosure

FEDERAL JUDICIAL CLERKSHIP INQUIRY

101 Maple Street
Columbia, SC 29205
January 7, 20__

The Honorable Elizabeth C. Potts
U.S. District Court
P.O. Box 1234
Greenville, SC 29607

Dear Judge Potts:

As a second-year law student at the University of South Carolina School of Law, I am writing to apply for a clerkship with you following my graduation in May 20__. I hope to practice in Greenville as a litigator after my clerkship. Sarah White, who clerked for you several years ago, told me that I would receive excellent experience working for you. Enclosed are my resume, a copy of my current law school transcript, a writing sample, and a list of references. I have asked Professor Pulaski, who is familiar with my writing and class work, and John T. Smith, the attorney who supervised my work last summer, to send letters of recommendation directly to you.

I am very interested in a federal clerkship. I enjoy research and writing, and my experience on the ABA Real Property, Probate & Trust Journal has allowed me to refine these skills. I am also a very organized person who can set priorities and follow through to ensure that cases progress through the system in a timely manner. I work well both as a member of a team and independently.

Greenville is my hometown, and I am there every Friday. If a day other than Friday is more convenient for you, I can easily arrange my schedule to come earlier in the week. I may be reached at (803) 878 – 9987 or via email at JHarkness@hotmail.com.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to meeting you.

Respectfully,



Joseph K. Harkness

Enclosures

REAFFIRMING INTEREST

1005 Woodvine Drive
Columbia, South Carolina 29206
November 1, 20__

William H. Green, Esquire
Smith, Green, Jones & Baldwin
P.O. Box 123
Columbia, South Carolina 29202

Dear Mr. Green:

Thank you for meeting with me on October 10. The visit was most enjoyable and productive for me. I am very enthusiastic about pursuing permanent employment with you after graduation. Per your request, I have enclosed a copy of a recommendation from a former employer. In my interview with Mr. Baldwin, he inquired about my writing and research ability, so I am also enclosing a writing sample.

Your firm's excellent _____ practice offers an ideal career opportunity for me. As a result of my interview, I also believe that I would be a good fit for the firm. If you require any additional information, please contact me at (803) 555-5454 or via email at WilnerCA@yahoo.com. Thank you again for your time, and I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,



Christine A. Wilner

Enclosures

THANK YOU NOTES

A thank you note is a business necessity. It shows your interest and ability to follow through as well as offering you an opportunity to expand on or clarify any topics that may have arisen during the interview. You should send a letter to the firm thanking them for their hospitality and reiterating your interest in employment. Your letter may be sent to one individual on the interview “team” (hiring attorney, administrative director, recruitment coordinator) if you met with five or six people, extending your thanks to all the individuals you met (rather than writing to everyone individually), or you can write to each person. If you spent more time with a particular member of the firm, you may want to send him/her a note. (If you interviewed with a team of only two people, you should write individually to each of them.)

Thank you notes are recommended, but not absolutely required, after most on-campus screening interviews. Some attorneys expect a letter, while others do not. It is never inappropriate to send a thank you note. Be sure to send them promptly, or decisions may be made before the employer receives your note. **For callbacks or other in-office interviews, a thank you note is mandatory.** Proofread your note carefully; a misspelled word or grammar error can eliminate you from consideration.

For most firms in the South, thank you letters may be typed or handwritten (if your handwriting is legible). For employers in other parts of the country, a typewritten letter in business form is probably the best. If you decide to send a handwritten note, be sure to use good business paper or a plain folded note. Do not use stationery with pictures or with a printed “Thank You.” Remember that this is a business thank you note rather than a note to a friend or relative. If you type the letter, it should include an inside address similar to those in the other samples in this packet.

SAMPLE HANDWRITTEN THANK YOU NOTE

Dear _____:

Thank you for a most informative and enjoyable interview on (Date). As you requested, I have enclosed a copy of my moot court brief as a writing sample for your review.

In light of my discussion with _____, I have particular interest in the _____ department.* *[Paragraph 2 can consist of anything which shows an insight you gained from the interview. E.g., “I was especially interested in hearing about your work for XYZ Corporation concerning their merger with QRS, Inc.” The paragraph is optional, but highly recommended.]

Please extend my thanks to _____, _____, _____, and _____ for their time. I would like to express my continued interest in [firm name] and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

TYPED THANK YOU NOTE

100 Arbor Place
Columbia, South Carolina 29201
October 11, 20__

William H. Green, Esquire
Smith, Green, Jones & Baldwin
P.O. Box 123
Columbia, South Carolina 29202

Dear Mr. Green:

Thank you for a most informative and enjoyable interview on October 10, 20__. It was a pleasure meeting all the members of your firm.

After our discussions about the various areas of practice within Smith Green, I continue to have a particular interest in working in the real estate section of your firm. However, the corporate section sparked my interest as well.

Please also extend my thanks to Mr. Smith, Mr. Jones, and Ms. Baldwin for their time. I would like to again express my desire to work as a summer law clerk for Smith, Green & Baldwin and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Christine A. Jones

THANK YOU NOTE

2030 Dunbarton Circle
Aiken, SC 29801
February 5, 20__

John Q. Grayson, Esquire
Merry, Grayson & Ives
500 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 21303

Dear Mr. Grayson:

I am writing to thank you for the interview I had with you last Friday in Washington. The interview and tour of your offices helped give me a better understanding of your firm and reinforced my strong desire to become an associate of Merry, Grayson & Ives.

If there is any additional information that you need from me to help your firm reach a positive decision regarding my application, please let me know. I am more than willing to visit your offices again for a further interview.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,



Jason L. Snyder

LETTERS IN RESPONSE TO OFFERS

As stated in the National Association of Law Placement's (NALP's) Principles and Standards for Law Placement and Recruitment Activities, all offers to law students should remain open for at least two weeks after the date made. For larger firms making offers in the fall interviewing season, the time period is much longer. (Not all employers honor these principles. See Career Services if you have questions about this.) As a consideration to the employer, you should confirm all offers, whether accepted or not, in writing. Be sure to make clear whether you are accepting, rejecting, or still considering the offer.

1320 Graytown Road, Apt. 6G
Columbia, SC 29210
January 18, 20__

Charles B. Goode, Jr., Esquire
Goode, Goode & Goode
1001 S. Main Street
Beaufort, SC 29901

Dear Mr. Goode:

I am quite pleased that you have offered me a summer position with your firm in the Commercial Division. As a first-year student who has a limited knowledge of law firms, I do want to consider a number of places before making a decision. However, I am very interested in the Goode firm and am very seriously considering your offer. I will let you know my decision no later than [X date].

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

NAME

ACKNOWLEDGING OFFER

52803 Adger Road
Columbia, SC 29204
February 22, 20__

Diane J. Rhodes, Esq.
Eller, Rhodes and Gray
3444 East Bay Street
Charleston, SC 29401

Dear Ms. Rhodes:

Thank you for your telephone call on Monday, February 21 offering me a position as a summer law clerk in your Charleston office. I was very impressed with all the information I received from you during our recent meeting and believe that my education can be supplemented with the experience gained working in your firm.

However, I would like to take a few days to consider this offer. I understand that you must have a decision from me within two weeks.

I am very pleased that you have offered this position to me. I will call or write to you no later than March 7.

Sincerely,



Elliott J. McGee

ACCEPTING SUMMER CLERKSHIP OFFER

2030 Dunbarton Circle
Columbia, SC 29204
March 15, 20__

Joseph Dewey, Esquire
Dewey Cheatham and Howe
500 Gervais Street
Columbia, SC 29205

Dear Mr. Dewey:

This letter confirms my acceptance of your offer to become a summer associate with the firm of Dewey Cheatham and Howe beginning work at the firm on May 20, 20__.

I look forward to being a summer associate of the prestigious firm of Dewey Cheatham and Howe. Thank you for this opportunity.

Respectfully,



Daniel T. Smith

ACCCEPTING PERMANENT OFFER

2030 Dunbarton Circle
Columbia, SC 29204
March 15, 20__

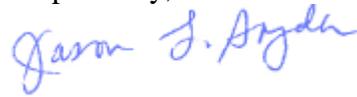
John Q. Grayson, Esquire
Merry, Grayson & Ives
500 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 21301

Dear Mr. Grayson:

This letter confirms my acceptance of your offer to become associated with the firm of Merry, Grayson & Ives upon my graduation from the University of South Carolina School of Law. It is my understanding that I will take the Maryland bar exam in July and then begin work at the firm on August 15, 20__.

I look forward to being an associate of the prestigious firm of Merry, Grayson & Ives. Thank you for this opportunity.

Respectfully,



Jason L. Snyder

ACCEPTING PERMANENT OFFER

1005 Winston Street
Columbia, SC 29210
January 16, 20__

Nancy M. Jackson, Esquire
Foster, Jackson & Jones
P.O. Box 11349
Columbia, SC 29211

Dear Ms. Jackson:

I wish to accept your offer to become an associate with the firm of Foster, Jackson & Jones in your Florence, South Carolina office. I appreciate the kindnesses extended to me throughout the interview process. My association with the firm is an exciting opportunity, and I look forward to becoming a member of your team.

It is my understanding that full-time employment will begin on August 15, 20__. As part of the offer, the firm will reimburse me for my bar examination fees as well as my moving expenses to Florence. The annual salary offered and accepted is \$39,000.00 plus possible bonuses. Other matters relating to benefits will be reviewed during my first few days in your office.

Please advise me if there is any other information you need or if any other details need to be worked out. I am anxious to join you and the firm after the bar examination. Thank you for this opportunity.

Very truly yours,



Janice T. Smith

DECLINING SUMMER CLERKSHIP OFFER

100 St. Andrews Road, Apt. 2B
Columbia, South Carolina 29210
March 16, 20__

Timothy J. Mason, Esquire
Mason, Robinson & Caruso
P. O. Box 15
Pickens, South Carolina 29671

Dear Mr. Mason:

Thank you for considering me for a summer associate in your firm. I just wanted to follow up from my previous phone call to let you know that I am unable to accept the position with your firm. It was a difficult decision, and I do hope you will consider me for a position with your firm in the future.

I wish you much success in your recruitment efforts, and I sincerely appreciate all of your kindness and consideration toward me.

Sincerely,



Mary T. Sloan

DECLINING PERMANENT OFFER

100 St. Andrews Road, Apt. 2B
Columbia, South Carolina 29210
July 23, 20__

James J. Macon, Esquire
Macon, Smith , Green & Gillespie
P.O. Box 15
Pickens, South Carolina 29671

Dear Mr. Macon:

Thank you for all of the time you have spent considering me for an associate position in your firm. I am very appreciative of all of your efforts and those of Mr. Smith, Mr. Green, and Mr. Gillespie, who have given me so much of their time.

After much deliberation, I must respectfully decline your invitation to join Macon, Smith, Green & Gillespie. I feel that another opportunity matches my qualifications and interests better at this point in my career.

I wish you much success in your recruitment efforts, and I sincerely appreciate all of your kindness and consideration toward me.

Best regards,



Mary T. Sloan

WITHDRAWAL LETTER (before an offer is made)

April 15, 20__
1000 Granby Square
Cayce, SC 29000

The Honorable John Doe
U.S. District Court for the District of South Carolina
7887 First Street
Charleston, South Carolina 29400

Dear Judge Doe:

Please withdraw my application from further consideration for the position of judicial law clerk beginning in August 20__. I have accepted a position with XYZ law firm. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Jason Q. Jason

Rev. 11/16