

# RESUME & COVER LETTER WORKSHOP

Career Services Office  
Chicago-Kent College of Law  
Fall 2013

# What We Will Cover Today

- Resume
- Cover Letters
- Writing Sample (cover page)
- Reference List
- Academic Transcripts

# Timelines to Apply

- **October 15:** first day 1Ls can meet with CSO advisor
- Only a few pre-December 1 applications: Mayoral Fellowship, a few federal government agencies (Gov't Honors & Internship Handbook)
- **December 1<sup>st</sup>:** 1Ls start applying to certain opportunities:
  - Large law firms/ Intellectual Property Boutiques
  - Federal Government (Gov't Honors & Internship Handbook)
  - Public Interest Law Initiative (PILI)
  - Midwest Public Interest Law Career Conference (MPILCC)
    - Register by December 4<sup>th</sup>
    - Upload resumes by January 3<sup>rd</sup>

# General Resume Tips

- MAKE IT BRIEF: ONE PAGE
- NEAT FORMAT, WHITE SPACE
- ACCURACY
  - GPA
  - Rank
- SAVE THE RESUME ON SYMPLICITY WITH YOUR NAME

# Resume Content

## 1. CONTACT INFORMATION

- No Objective
- No “References Available Upon Request”

## 2. EDUCATION

## 3. EXPERIENCE (LEGAL AND OTHER)

## 4. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, INTERESTS, OTHER CATEGORIES (languages, professional licenses, publications, etc.)

# CONTACT INFORMATION\*

## (letterhead)

ATTICUS FINCH

1000 Elm Street

Chicago, IL 60657

(312) 555-1212

[afinch@kentlaw.iit.edu](mailto:afinch@kentlaw.iit.edu)

\*Goes on ALL documents



# EDUCATION

**CHICAGO-KENT COLLEGE OF LAW**, Chicago, IL

*Juris Doctor Candidate*, May 2016

*Litigation and Alternative Dispute Resolution Certificate (LADR)*

GPA: 3.05 / 4.0

**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA**, Urbana, IL

*Bachelor of Arts in Psychology*, May 2012

GPA: 3.26/4.0

- Future Attorneys of America, 2006-2008
- Illini Marching Band, 2004-2006
- Kappa Kappa Gamma, 2004-2006

# EXPERIENCE

**Honorable Arlander Keys, U.S. District Court,  
Northern District of Illinois, Chicago, Illinois**

Judicial Extern, May 2012 - August 2012

- Researched and helped draft two judicial opinions and three legal memoranda
- Verified case law and statutes on briefs filed in court
- Observed hearings, pretrial conferences, and trials



# EXPERIENCE

**Hesson International, Chicago, Illinois**

Senior Staff Associate, February 2008 to July 2010

- Researched and analyzed client contracts to determine transfer pricing trends resulting from inter-company transactions
- Recommended research strategies to other offices conducting due diligence investigations
- Trained and supervised all staff associates and interns
- Oversaw departmental project evaluating legal documents used for tax litigation

# EXPERIENCE

## **Law Offices of Chicago-Kent, Employment Discrimination and Civil Rights Litigation, Chicago, IL**

*Legal Intern, May 2013 - Present*

- Research and write legal memoranda regarding employment discrimination
- Interview clients and witnesses
- Draft motions for summary judgment, motions to compel, requests for production, request for admissions, and pleadings
- Review and analyze discovery documents

# EXPERIENCE

**BENNIGAN'S RESTAURANT, Chicago, IL**

*Server, May - August 2011*

- Assisted management with training and supervision of new employees
- Increased sales by aggressively promoting specials

# PUBLICATION

- “How to Survive a Bear Market With Your Bare Assets,” *Fortune Magazine*, March 15, 2012.

# COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- **Habitat for Humanity**, Fundraiser and Home Builder, 2010 - 2011
- **Ronald McDonald House**, Fundraiser and “Big Sister”, 2008 - 2010
- **Volunteer Illini Projects**, Worked for a variety of children’s organizations, 2007 - 2009

# INTERESTS

- Triathlon training, French cuisine, Motown music, photography

# LANGUAGES

- Fluent in Russian; Proficient in French; Conversational Spanish



# Common Resume Errors

- 2 Page Resume (or longer)
- Misstating your school/employer's name (Chicago-Kent College of Law, not "School of Law")
- Misstating your degree ("Juris Doctor" not "Doctorate" or "Jurist")
- Commas between month and year (should be "May 2010" not "May, 2010")

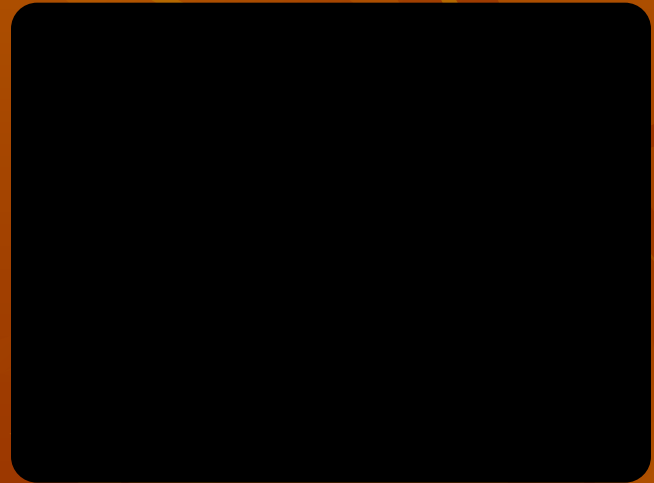
# Common Resume Errors

- Too much formatting – avoid tables, they can be very hard to edit
- Using color or crazy Fonts
- Including Objective, References Available
- Using the wrong verb tense
- TYPOS!

# Employer Notes: Resumes



**Paul Ferak, Greenberg Traurig LLP**



**Felicia Gerber Perlman, Skadden**

# Legal Cover Letters

- Introduces you to employers
- Works as a writing sample
- Do NOT repeat/ copy the entries from your resume
- Focus on why you are interested in the employer and what SKILLS you can offer employer

# Cover Letters: Getting Started

- If replying to a job posting, identify the qualifications the employer seeks
- Research: Review the firm or organization website, look at their focus or mission, factor that into your letter
- Why do you want to work for that employer?
- What skills or experiences can you offer that employer?

# Cover Letter Format

- Business letter format
- Date
- Address Block
- Address line
- Un-indented paragraphs
- Signature



## SAMPLE COVER LETTER FORMAT

**Your Name Here**

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Your Address Here • Chicago, IL 60601 • 312/555-5555 • youremailhere@kentlaw.iit.edu

Date

Contact Name

Contact Title

Organization Name

Address

City, State Zip

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name of Contact:

**Opening Paragraph:** Introduce yourself with your law school and class year. State why you are writing/what position you want. Mention your specific interest in and/or experience that relates to the employer and/or position. If in a different city than you currently live in, mention your connection to the city.

**Qualifications and Statement of Interest Paragraph:** Statement of your qualifications and why you are interested in this organization. Tell the employer about you, how you will meet the employer's needs; describe your skills, experience and strengths. Don't focus on why the organization would be a great place to work—they already know that.

**Additional Statement of Interest/Qualifications Paragraph:** If warranted by your experience or education, qualifications.

**Closing Paragraph:** Closing statement. State the action you plan to take (e.g., that you welcome the opportunity to discuss your qualifications in further detail; that you look forward to hearing from them; or, that you will be in the area on particular dates and would appreciate the opportunity to meet with someone from the organization at that time, etc.). Finally, thank them for their time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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*Signature*

Your Name

Enclosure(s)

# Addressing the Cover Letter

- Never “To Whom It May Concern”
- Dear Ms. or Mr. \_\_\_\_\_:
- If blind posting at firm, send to “Dear Hiring Partner:”

# Addressing the Cover Letter

- Address it to Person with hiring authority or Personal Contact
- Large firms: recruiting coordinator (get the title right)
- Small/mid-sized firms: if not in job post, check the Chicago Area Law Firm list (4 or more) for a contact, if smaller than 4 attorneys do some investigation

# FIRST PARAGRAPH: *THE INTRODUCTION*

- Who are you?
- What do you want?
- How Did You Find the Job?
  - Referral (“name drop”)
  - Job Posting/Advertisement
- “The Hook” - Express interest in the employer or position, explain skills/experience you can offer

# BODY PARAGRAPHS

- Why you should be hired
- Present Evidence/support: explain your skills/interests/experience and how they relate to needs of employer
- Highlight/elaborate on things mentioned in your resume
- Discuss experiences more suitable for a cover letter than a resume
- Individuality: make cover letter your own

# LAST PARAGRAPH: *THE CLOSING*

- Direct request for a personal interview
- Make it easy for the employer to schedule a meeting
- Have a plan in place
- Say “please” and “thank you”



# Avoid Cover Letter Mistakes

- Correctly identify the name of the position to which you are applying (law clerk, summer associate, judicial externship, etc.)
- Correctly identify the type of place where you are applying (firm, agency, organization)
- Use the correct position title of the recruiting contact
- Don't focus on why the organization would be a great place to work (Rule: it's not about you, it's about helping them!)

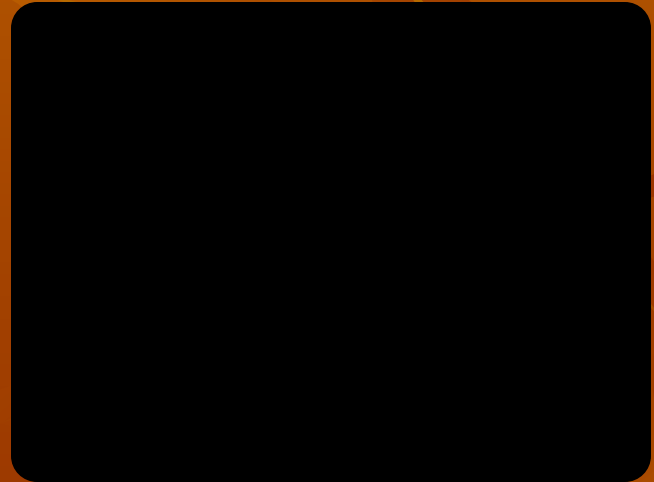
# Avoid Cover Letter Mistakes

- Don't write that you are the “perfect” or “ideal” fit, or state that you have “unique” experience, let the employer make a determination based on the evidence you present in your cover letter and resume
- Don't make statements without supporting evidence
- Don't be too casual
- Don't send cookie-cutter cover letters to every employer, they are obvious, and they make you look insincere

# Employer Notes: Cover Letters

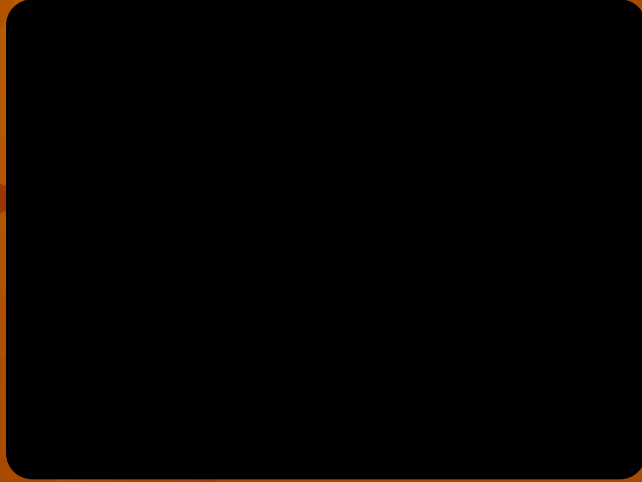


**Kevin Tessier, Reed Smith LLP**

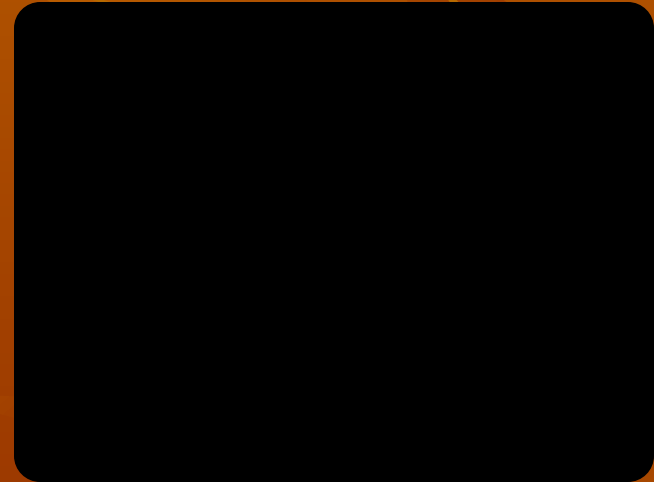


**Christian Hennion, Katten**

# Employer Notes: Cover Letter



**Eileen King Bower,  
Troutman Sanders LLP**



# Writing Samples

- 10 pages maximum
- Persuasive writing, usually some of the introduction and an argument section from your spring legal writing brief
- Include cover page
- Good idea to have a legal writing sample on hand at any interview

*Sample Writing Sample Cover Page*

**ALLY McBEAL**  
**1545 Scarlett Street**  
**Chicago, Illinois 60600**  
**312.555.1212**  
**amcbeal@kentlaw.iit.edu**

**Writing Sample**

This writing sample is an office memorandum, in its entirety, regarding whether a client may have a viable claim for intentional infliction of emotional distress pursuant to Illinois law. I drafted this memorandum for my Legal Writing I course in Fall 2011.



# List of References

- Never say “References available upon request” on a legal resume
- Start gathering them now – contact prospective references and offer to send them an updated resume
  - BE PROFESSIONAL WITH EVERYONE
- References are on a separate page, generally 3 of them, 1 or 2 educational, 1 or 2 employment references
- Use the same heading with contact information at the top of reference page that you use on top of the resume
- Include name, title, employer, address, phone and email for each reference
- Include a line that says “Supervisor at x” if not obvious
- See Sample in today’s handout

## SAMPLE REFERENCE LIST FORMAT

**ALLY McBEAL**  
1545 Scarlett Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60600  
312.555.1212  
amcbeal@kentlaw.iit.edu

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### References

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**Professor Marcia L. McCormick**  
Visiting Assistant Professor of Law  
Chicago-Kent College of Law  
Illinois Institute of Technology  
565 West Adams, Room 717  
Chicago, IL 60661  
(312) 906-5000  
mmccormi@kentlaw.iit.edu

\*Earned an “A” in Professor McCormick’s Legal Writing I course.

**Ms. Samantha Jones**  
Director  
Marimeta Camp for Girls  
1500 Rural Road  
Eagle River, WI 54521  
(715) 555-0000

\*Ms. Jones was my direct supervisor at Marimeta Camp for Girls during Summers 2006 – 2007.

**Dr. Carl Jung**  
Professor of Psychology  
University of Illinois  
603 East Daniel Street  
Champaign, IL 61820  
(217) 333-0631  
cjung@uiuc.edu

\*Professor Jung was my undergraduate advisor and my supervisor for the Department Honors Thesis program.

# Academic Transcripts

- Request “official” transcript from Registrar’s Office – 2d Floor (if needed)
- Most employers will accept an “unofficial” transcript i.e. a Word document you create yourself
- Symplicity cannot handle the large file sizes of PDF transcripts – you must make a Word version (see handout)
- You can list semesters in chronological or reverse chronological – but not out of order
- You should update your transcript every semester after grades come out

# SAMPLE UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT FORMAT

**JOHN DOE**

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123 Main St. • Chicago, IL 60601 • 312/555-5555 • jdoe123@kentlaw.iit.edu

**John Doe**  
**Unofficial Transcript**  
**Chicago-Kent College of Law**  
Class Year: 2L  
Graduation Date: May 2015

**Fall 2012:**

Course:	Credits:	Grade
Contracts	5	B+
Torts	5	B
Criminal Law	3	B+
Legal Writing I	3	A

Fall 2012 GPA: **3.411/4.0**

**Spring 2013:**

Course:	Credits:	Grade
Civil Procedure	5	A
Property	4	A-
Legislative Process	3	B+
Legal Writing II	2	A

Spring 2013 GPA: **3.29/4.0**

Cumulative GPA as of Spring 2013: **3.373/4.0**

Class Rank: 74/296, Top 25%

# After You Apply...

- **THANK YOU NOTES:** Send a thank you note or email immediately after an interview.
- Thank you notes are a great time to add anything you didn't get to say or fix something you felt was a misstep.
- **FOLLOW UP:** Be assertive! Check-in.

# CSO APPLICATION GUIDES

- <http://www.kentlaw.iit.edu/career-preparation/career-services>, click on “Students” on left side, then “Applying & Interviewing for a Job”
  - Resume & Cover Letter Guide
  - Writing Sample Guide
  - Sample Word Transcripts



# Next Steps

- Draft legal version of your resume
- Upload a draft to Symplicity:
  - Watch for an email this week with instructions
  - “Pending Documents”
- Meet with your assigned Career Counselor beginning October 15; come in by January 24, 2014



Questions?