

Family Law Education Reform Project

Hofstra FLS Journal Assignment No.1 - Allen Int. (Divorce)

OVERVIEW

This document contains instructions for students in the completion of a post-exercise self-evaluation. The journal is an important part of the process and allows for students to reflect on their experiences.

EXPLANATION AND COMMENTS

This memorandum should be given to students following the client interview skills exercise. This memo is for students who were assigned the role of the attorney for the Husband or Wife.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andrew Schepard

Professor of Law
Hofstra University School of Law

J. Herbie DiFonzo

Professor of Law
Hofstra University School of Law

Professor Schepard is the Chair of the Family Law Education Reform Project co-sponsored by Hofstra Law School and the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts. He is an attorney member of the Judicial Conference of the State of New York. Professor Schepard is also Program Director for the National Institute of Trial Advocacy's course in Modern Divorce Advocacy and has served as Program Director for NITA's Child Advocacy, Deposition and Trial Advocacy courses.

Professor DiFonzo has had a wide-ranging two decades of law practice before becoming a full-time professor, including stints as a federal prosecutor and as a litigator in the areas of family law, criminal defense, negligence, and professional malpractice. In all, he conducted over 30 jury trials and several dozen appeals. He has taught at Hofstra since 1995. From 1995-2003, he served as Director of the Criminal Justice Clinic. From 2005-2008, he served as Director of the LL.M. Program in Family Law.

*Family Law with Skills
Hofstra University School of Law
Fall 2008*

**SKILLS EXERCISE - CLIENT INTERVIEW
JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT NO. 1**

I. STUDENT ATTORNEYS

Following the Family Law with Skills Exercise on Friday, September 5, 2008, if you were assigned the role of the attorney for the Husband or Wife, please prepare a written memorandum to the file documenting your client interview.

The heading on your memorandum should be set-up as follows:

MEMORANDUM

To: FILE
Fr: [your full name]
Da: September 5, 2008
RE: Journal Assignment No. 1 – Allen Client Interview

[INSERT BODY OF MEMO]

Each memorandum should be **three (3) pages**, double-spaced, completed on or before **Tuesday, September 9, 2008**, and placed in your journals for collection at the end of the semester.

In your memorandum, please be sure to address the following questions:

1. How do you intend to follow-up with the client on the initial interview?
2. What additional facts do you need and want to gather from the client?
3. How do you plan to gather the additional information?
4. What issues have you spotted and what research do you think you need to do? Please explain why in your answer.
5. If you were to interview this client again, what would you do differently and why?

II. CLIENT ROLE PLAY

If you played a client for this skills exercise, please prepare a letter to your attorney including the date, your full name and address, and reference Journal Assignment No. 1 – Allen Client Interview. Your letter should be **three (3) pages**, double-spaced, completed on or before **Tuesday, September 9, 2008**, and placed in your journals for collection at the end of the semester.

In your letter, please be sure to address the following questions (without using any indentifying information as to the student attorney):

- (1) Did your attorney explain the retainer and fees to you?
- (2) Did your attorney build a relationship of trust and confidence with you? Please explain.
- (3) Do you feel that your attorney listened to you and heard what you were saying? Please explain.
- (4) What do you think your attorney did well? Please list at least three things and explain in detail.
- (5) What do you think your attorney should do differently? Please list at least three things and explain in detail.

III. FEEDBACK

As you know, this is a new course and your participation is crucial to its success and any future improvements. As such, we welcome your feedback after each skills exercise. Please take a moment and include in your Journal Assignment No. 1 – Allen Client Interview, at least a paragraph on what you liked about this assignment and why; and what you did not find helpful and why. This entry may be anonymous and at the end of the semester we will have you remove these entries from your journals and place them in a separate pile for collection. But for now, please simply hold on to them with other journal entries.

Thank you.