

Week Four-Opening and Closing Statements and a Trip to Tampa (Among Other Places!)

Mary Hudson - University of Florida

This was the busiest week yet. We started the week with the opening and closing statements seminar in preparation for the workshop later in the week. For me, this workshop was a bit intimidating because it was the first one that I had absolutely zero experience with. However, partner Rob Blank was a wonderful teacher and gave us really good information.

Between prepping for the upcoming opening and closing workshop in Tampa, the Orlando summer associates enjoyed a few social events. We were invited to an Inn of Court dinner with partner Lan Kennedy-Davis and of counsel Brad Davis. The event was in a beautiful location and we got to play Jeopardy. The next day, partners Steve Kline and Brett Carey took us to lunch with some of the Orlando associates. It was a lot of fun and I really feel like I am getting to know the people in the office.

Three of the Orlando summer associates office carpooled to Tampa, which was a great idea. It allowed for us to chat and get to know each other a little better. My background is in hospitality, so I firmly believe that having a strong, supportive team is crucial to an organization's success. While there is certainly healthy competition and we all want to do our best, there is also an unshakable sense of comradery among the summer associates. I believe that this teamwork is reflective of the culture at RumbergerKirk. The people here seem to genuinely care about each other and cheer each other on, and that spirit shines through the summer associate program as well.

Once we arrived in Tampa, we reunited with the summer associates that are not in Orlando and got to catch up and share our experiences. There was not too much time for chatting though, because the opening and closing statements workshop was fast approaching. Although I was nervous, I delivered my closing statement and felt proud when I was finished.

The feedback I received was helpful to knowing which of my techniques seemed to resonate with the "jurors" and which ones were confusing, unclear, or unhelpful. Seeing the other summer associates and their techniques and approaches was illuminating as well. Even though we were all working from the same fact pattern, each one of us utilized the facts a little differently and it was beneficial to see their thought processes play out.

After the workshop, we had lunch with the Tampa associates at Columbia restaurant, which was wonderful. I am ready for what next week will bring.