

summer associate program

LAW STUDENTS LEARN THE ROPEs DOING PRO BONO

Summer is a time for recruiting. We at inMotion recognize this tremendous opportunity to involve the next crop of new lawyers in our work. Each year we and our partnering corporate law firms give summer associates a unique opportunity to represent inMotion clients in Family and Supreme Courts under the supervision of a mentoring attorney at their firm. InMotion's Summer Associate Program offers law students a hands-on introduction not only to the practice of family, matrimonial and immigration law — but to the nit and grit of litigating a case in the City's courts. Law students participating in the program learn everything from to how to draft a discovery request to how to argue a motion in front of a judge.

We spoke recently with Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP summer associates, **Alan Kluegel**, Georgetown University Law Center, and **Payal K. Shah**, Columbia University School of Law, about their experiences helping an Iranian mother secure a permanent order of protection and temporary child support for her three children.

Haadiya* and her husband married over 20 years ago in Iran. They have three children who are now 15, 17 and 18 years old. Haadiya's husband came to the United States eight years ago, leaving her alone to raise their children in Iran. When she and her children recently moved to the U.S. to join their father, they discovered that he had started a second family with another woman. Once in New York, Haadiya and her children were forced to share a small one-bedroom apartment with his new family. A few months after their arrival, Haadiya's husband abandoned them and moved with his girlfriend and her children to Long Island.

Explaining further details about the case, Alan Kluegel shares, "Haadiya was in a hard situation, and her status as a non-English speaking immigrant made it even harder. Haadiya was particularly vulnerable, as she relied on her husband

to keep her in the country and was unable to provide for herself or her children. When he became emotionally abusive and stopped supporting her and her children, she had very few options." With the help of her 18-year-old daughter, Haadiya filed a pro se petition for child support. Afterwards, her husband began stalking and threatening her. Her daughter helped Haadiya obtain a temporary order of protection and reached out to inMotion on her mother's behalf for help to make the temporary order permanent.

Payal states, "Our supervising attorneys, Matthew Funk and Lauri Sawyer, were tremendously helpful and allowed us to do most of the legwork on the case." Alan adds, "We drafted the complaint, subpoenas and motion for temporary child support and made sure all of the paperwork got where it needed to go. We were responsible for keeping the client informed throughout the case. We appeared in Family Court twice. In our first hearing, we negotiated a two-year extension of the order of protection with opposing counsel and won temporary child support at our second hearing."

"This outcome was exactly what Haadiya and her daughter were seeking to alleviate their fears for their physical safety and the

tremendous financial stress of running a four-person household on a teenager's income," says Payal. "It is also important to note the impact this legal ruling will have for Haadiya in Iran where she faces severe criticism from her family members and community—the court ruling helps to legitimize her separation from her husband."

"I learned a lot about the basics of simple litigation—and learned about nearly every support function available to members of our firm. When you handle one of these cases, you are responsible for making sure everything gets done—you have to learn where the managing clerk's office is, how to find local rules of procedures, who to call to get something delivered. I not only learned how litigation works, I learned how the firm works."

A few months after Payal and Alan returned to school, Simpson Thacher & Bartlett associates Lauri Sawyer, Jennifer Barall and Amanda Motsinger negotiated a final settlement with opposing counsel and secured additional child support for Haadiya and her family.

Speaking about their summer experience at the firm, Payal and Alan share, "The opportunity to work on Haadiya's case allowed us to see the more human side of the firm, the passion in our colleagues that only comes out when you are jointly

sympathetic and concerned about the client you are representing." Alan adds, "It was impressive how many lawyers at Simpson Thacher had extensive experience working on inMotion matters. I liked that the firm treated Haadiya's case as though it was just as important as the multi-million dollar matters I was also working on."

"I learned a lot about the basics of simple litigation. And," Alan states, "I learned about nearly every support function available to members of our firm. When you handle one of these cases, you are responsible for making sure everything gets done—you have to learn where the managing clerk's office is, how to find local rules of procedures, who to call to get something delivered. I not only learned how litigation works, I learned how the firm works."

"This experience was a great way to learn trial practice while making a genuine impact on the lives of others," Payal continues. "Many of us enter law firms saying that we are committed to public interest; this program is a good way to make sure that we start our legal careers off on the right foot."

**Client's name and country of origin have been changed to protect her identity.*