

## Summer Interns

This summer 15 law student interns joined inMotion's Manhattan and Bronx offices to learn the nit and grit of the daily practice of family and matrimonial law in New York City courts. **Shanel Spence** and **Kimberly Hart-Mutchnik**, both beginning their second year of law school, share some of their thoughts and summer experiences.



Summer intern Shanel Spence pauses to share and reflect on her experiences at inMotion.

"My internship at inMotion was an immensely valuable professional and personal experience," states Shanel Spence. "Besides learning about New York family law, I honed my writing, research and communication skills. Over the course of the summer I drafted motions, answers, memos, divorce papers, subpoenas and interroga-

tories. And my interview skills were sharpened by many, many hours of face-to-face client interviews and telephone intakes screening new clients."

Shanel adds, "Katherine Graham, a fellow intern, and I partnered to help Sidley Austin Brown & Wood extern Matthew Ferguson prepare for an upcoming trial in Family Court. Matt is representing **Alexandra\*** in an order of protection and child custody case against her daughter's father, a former police officer. Alexandra had a long-term affair with the father who was married to another woman throughout their relationship. He has used his connections at the police department to stalk Alexandra and his gun to intimidate her during many verbal arguments. The father's custody suit falsely alleged drug use and neglect and claimed that Alexandra's home was unfit. The forensic expert appointed by the court wrote a highly biased report which painted a mentally unstable, incompetent and destitute picture of Alexandra and unfairly

recommended that the court grant custody to the father. The court-appointed psychologist who authored the report ignored the many years of strong parenting Alexandra has given to her other three children and the fact that her current, treating psychologist considers Alexandra a good mother.

"Preparing for the trial, Katherine and I drafted subpoenas for the court-appointed psychologist's notes, to prove the racial and socioeconomic bias of the forensic report, and for the father's work schedule, to establish that he could only be a part-time parent to the child. We also helped prepare Alexandra and her older children to testify at the trial.

"Going to Bronx Family Court to observe the first day of Alexandra's trial was one of the best moments of my internship at inMotion. Everything in Family Court is up close and personal. The judge was very harsh and extremely intolerant of bad lawyering and trial mistakes. It was the first time that I had the opportunity to observe witnesses testify and be cross-examined in Family Court. The tension is high but observing a case in court is a truly great experience."

"We are certain that Alexandra will have the best chance of prevailing in this difficult custody battle with the Sidley extern team representing her going forward," states inMotion legal program director Ramonita Cordero. "They anticipate months of additional preparation and significant time on trial before a final decision is rendered in this case."

Kimberly Hart Mutchnik shares, "Working at inMotion has given me an insight into poverty law issues and the unique challenges indigent women face trying to access the legal system. So many poor women

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hit bureaucratic walls when seeking even uncomplicated legal actions on their own—something as seemingly simple as serving legal papers can become an impossible obstacle. One of the most satisfying assignments I had this summer was to assist **Yolanda\***, a woman abandoned by her husband over 12 years ago, whose uncontested divorce was put in limbo for 10 years because she did not know where her husband lived, and as a result, was unable to serve him with notice.

"After an address was located for Yolanda's husband in Pennsylvania, I worked with local sheriff departments to serve her husband. However, completing service in another state was not straightforward. Our first two attempts were made to addresses where her husband no longer lived. On the third attempt, the Pennsylvania sheriff's department sent an officer to the correct address but served the papers to the husband's girlfriend. While the

Pennsylvania police had executed the service in accordance with their state's laws, they did not meet the requirements of New York State, rendering the service incomplete. Without a persistent advocate to negotiate with local authorities, Yolanda's divorce action would have again come to a standstill. I was able to persuade the county's sheriff's department to make a fourth attempt, after explaining New York State legal requirements and Yolanda's personal situation, and made it clear that she did not have the financial resources to travel out of state or to hire a private investigator to complete the service. The police returned to his home and served Yolanda's husband directly. Yolanda and inMotion are currently waiting for her husband's response to the divorce action. After more than a decade with her life at a stand-still, Yolanda is now poised to move forward."



Kimberly Hart Mutchnik, summer intern, talks about advocating on behalf of inMotion's clients.

InMotion extends special thanks and appreciation to all of our legal interns who dedicated their summers and their unique talents to helping indigent New York women find a voice and access to justice.

**Law Student Interns**

- REBECCA BOON  
*Hofstra University School of Law*
- AMY CARA BROSNAN  
*Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law*
- KATHERINE GRAHAM  
*Rutgers University School of Law*
- CATHERINE HUGHES  
*New York Law School*
- HEATHER KEEGAN  
*New York University School of Law*
- JESSICA LUCAJ  
*Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law*
- CHRISTINE MOON  
*Wake Forest University School of Law*
- KIMBERLY HART MUTCHNIK  
*Thomas M. Cooley Law School*
- STEPHANIE ODDO  
*Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law*
- LAUREN RACKOW  
*New York University School of Law*
- SHANEL SPENCE  
*Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law*

**Summer Associate Interns**

- CAROL CHANG  
*Schulte Roth & Zabel LLP, Georgetown University Law Center*
- CARYN GREENSPAN  
*Schulte Roth & Zabel LLP, Fordham University School of Law*
- CAREN LERNER  
*Willkie Farr and Gallagher LLP, University of California, Berkley School of Law*
- KRISTIN MCNAMARA  
*Willkie Farr and Gallagher LLP, Cornell Law School*

**Paralegal Interns**

- ANNA GLODEK
- GERALDINE IMBAULT
- ELISA MEDINA
- TIZIANA ORLANDO



A few of the summer interns working in our Manhattan office, pictured from front left: Geraldine Imbault, Kimberly Hart Mutchnik, Kristin McNamara, Caren Lerner, Christine Moon, Jessica Lucaj and Shanel Spence.