

Interview Assessment #5

Name of Professional: Amanda Doom

Profession/Title: Nonprofit Immigration Lawyer

Business/Company Name: Catholic Charities of Dallas

Date of Interview: Tuesday, October 31st

Assessment:

My fifth and final (required) interview was with Ms. Amanda Doom from Catholic Charities of Dallas. I was so excited being able to interview her because she was actually the first nonprofit lawyer I got the chance to talk to. Up to that point, I had spoken with many private lawyers, and even one immigration attorney, but never a nonprofit immigration attorney, so it was a great experience being able to meet with her. From the beginning, I was really able to see the stark differences in for-profit and nonprofit work, and even though I tangentially had known they would be different, it wasn't until I actually got the chance to speak to her that I really gained a sense of how the dynamics of each differ from each other.

First and foremost I learned that nonprofit law can be really difficult. Because people that chose private lawyers have the funds to afford one, the clientele of private, for-profit firms are already intrinsically more financially stable and come from a higher financial status. In contrast, Ms. Doom spoke on the wide varied of people she meets with. Some had lots of money while some were struggling financially so much that they didn't always have a stable source of income, or even a place to live. She really stressed this in the interview as something that created the biggest difference with traditional firms and nonprofit, which although rationally makes sense, was still kind of a surprise to me. I had thought that it would be harder to work with a nonprofit, but I didn't get an idea of just how different the two would be in terms of clients until Ms. Doom mentioned it.

Ms. Doom also spoke on how much trouble and difficulty working with the government gave the Catholic Charities of Dallas. In contrast to the solo immigration

lawyer I spoke with a few weeks ago, Ms. Whitehouse, Ms. Doom really faced great trouble as the result of the government cutting legislation and funding that helped her clients and helped other nonprofit lawyers. With Ms. Whitehouse, the government seemed to be that of a pest, making things inconvenient at times, but with Ms. Doom more so directly influenced her capability to be a successful lawyer and was something that continually made her job significantly harder. I thought that this was really interesting, but at the same time, quite sad that a group doing such good work for the community of Dallas faced so much hardship due to government restrictions. She added to this by saying job turnover was very common at the nonprofit because government-given funds were often getting cut, required people to get fired as a result, and the difficult, emotionally-taxing work they all did was hard for lots to do for long periods of time. And that all being said, they still made less than for-profit attorneys, and so often left to make more money at a private practice.

Overall, I really enjoyed speaking with Ms. Doom. I gained so much information from the interview about nonprofit law that, even though I had been researching about it for months, didn't really sink in until I saw directly how starkly different it could be in actual practice from for-profit law. I'm so glad I had the opportunity to speak with her and look forward to where this takes me from here over the next few months in ISM.