



Gray Plant Mooty Provides Law Students with On-the-Job Experience

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So how do you know if you're prepared for a legal career at a law firm? Well, apart from taking law classes and participating in mock trials, hands-on experience is preferable and Gray Plant Mooty offers that opportunity through its summer and fall associate programs.

For over 40 years, Gray Plant Mooty has hosted summer associates. Gray Plant Mooty's summer program combines valuable work experience with mentorship and social events to expose students to the legal work as well as the dynamics and culture of a law firm. Students choose Gray Plant Mooty for its long-standing reputation, inclusive culture, and the variety of experiences the full-service, corporate law firm provides.

"I had less of an idea of what areas of law I was interested in after my first year (1L) of law school than I do now," said returning Gray Plant Mooty summer associate **Maria de Sam Lazaro** (University of Minnesota Law School). "I knew I wanted to work somewhere that would allow me to try out different practice areas. I appreciate that Gray Plant Mooty's program allows summer associates to work on projects with many different attorneys and in many different practice areas."

Each year the firm hosts about eight law students—two 1L (completed one year of law school) students (one from the longstanding Gray Plant Mooty Minority Clerkship Program and one from Twin Cities Diversity in Practice) and four to six 2L's (completed two years of law school).

The majority of students are based in the firm's main headquarters in Minneapolis, but some are in the firm's other locations. We have a large class this summer with seven in the Minneapolis office, two in the St. Cloud, Minnesota, office, and one is serving as the first summer associate in the Washington, D.C. office.

"Working at the D.C. office, in particular, has been a real treat," said 2L summer associate **Katherine Morrison** (Georgetown University Law Center) who is spending her first summer with Gray Plant Mooty. "Since my first day, I have genuinely felt like I am needed and am part of the team. My work has been both extremely varied and hands-on. I have been tasked with performing substantive legal tasks with little supervision, which allows for a faster-paced learning environment, which is what I hoped for as a summer associate."



Students are paired with both a principal mentor and an associate mentor and over the course of the two-month program they work alongside multiple attorneys on a variety of projects and open cases. The legal work has included research and writing client memos, observational opportunities, writing client alerts on the latest legal updates, and pro bono casework.

"I love that people and teams work together across practice groups to share knowledge to give the best possible service to the client," said returning summer associate **Abby Swanson Garney** (University of Minnesota Law School). "Gray Plant Mooty is a group of kind, brilliant people doing the work I want to do, in a friendly, collaborative, and supportive environment."

Gray Plant Mooty is one of the founding firms of Twin Cities Diversity in Practice (TCDIP). As part of that organization, the firm participates in the 1L Summer Rotation Clerkship program. Each year, the selected student from this program divides their time between the firm and the in-house legal department of a Fortune 500 company.

"I know that a lot of corporations don't generally hire law students right out of school, so it was an excellent opportunity to experience what this career path looks like," said de Sam Lazaro who participated in the rotation program last year. "I found it fascinating to see what aspects of in-house work are similar to those at a law firm (similar practice areas, structure, etc.) and what aspects are different (having only one "client," playing a supervisory role rather than a hands-on role in litigation, etc.)."

As the organization name suggests, participation in TCDIP (and the summer program as a whole) helps the firm attract diverse talent. The firm recognizes that it can best serve clients by having a diverse team that brings a variety of experiences and perspectives to the table.

"There are a number of aspects of the Gray Plant Mooty culture that make this a great place to work, including a true commitment to diversity," said Swanson Garney. "Additionally, the firm has a number of amazing women in leadership roles who are not only inspiring, but also are always willing to sit down and talk about their practice one on one."

Many of the firm's current attorneys began their career with Gray Plant Mooty as summer associates, including the firm's current Co-Managing Officers **Sarah Duniway** and **Charles Maier**. The summer associate program provides both the firm and the students with the opportunity to determine whether there is a fit.

"My time as a summer associate gave me a realistic and exciting test run at being a civil litigator and propelled me into my legal career at Gray Plant Mooty," said Maier.



"I appreciated the relationships that I built and the assignments and observational opportunities that I received," added Associate **Ashley Bailey**, who completed both her 1L and 2L summer programs at the firm and is now a full-time attorney.

"Looking back, both of these translated into what my experience at Gray Plant Mooty has ultimately been. The firm has a collaborative environment, and working with a great team of people—including shareholders, associates, paralegals, and other staff members—is important not only for providing excellent client service, but for learning. As a junior associate, you are learning so much and I have always appreciated being able to do so in a supportive environment where I am able to work on interesting and complex legal matters, while also being empowered to ask questions, seek feedback, and interact with clients."

Learn more about Gray Plant Mooty's summer or fall associates program by visiting the careers section of the firm's website at www.gpmlaw.com/careers.

[**Pictured above:** 2018 Summer Associates Maria de Sam Lazaro (left) and Abby Swanson Garney (right) collaborate on a project in Gray Plant Mooty's Minneapolis office.]