

Access to the Bar Award Review 2015

My name is Byroni Kleopa and I was privileged enough to be awarded a Middle Temple Access to the Bar Scholarship. Along with my fellow scholars, we were each awarded a weeks long mini pupillage and a week marshalling a judge. I undertook the mini pupillage at 39 Essex Street under the supervision of Mr Vikram Sachdeva QC who could not have been more helpful. I witnessed work in various practice areas and shadowed different members of chambers. This gave me a first-hand experience of what chambers is like and the type of work that 39 Essex Street undertake specifically. Deriving from this I was able to evaluate which areas that I did not enjoy and which areas I was surprised that I did like for example Public Law.

During my weeks marshalling I was fortunate enough to shadow Bean LJ in the Court of Appeal. I witnessed the breadth of the work that the Court of Appeal undertakes, some fantastic advocacy as well as understanding how judges prepare for cases and their decision process. After expressing my want to experience some Chancery work, Bean LJ was extremely accommodating in organising for me to sit with Hildyard J in the High Court (Chancery Division).

Coming from an underprivileged background, this scheme has given me insight into a career at the Bar that would never have otherwise been possible. Everyone that I met along the way could not have been happier to answer my endless questions and allow me to experience areas and work that I thought I might prefer. I was also directly put in touch with other practitioners in order to aid me in expanding my network and I was able to meet other barristers at a COMBAR event arranged for the benefit of all of the Scholars. I used these contacts to secure a mini pupillage at 3 Hare Court and Ten Old Square and meet with Mr Derek Wood CBE QC and Miss Ciara Fairley of Falcon Chambers. Therefore gaining the scholarship creates numerous and additional opportunities to advantage of.

All those involved with the scholarship have made an enormous difference in enabling students in similar situations as myself access a career that is extremely difficult to penetrate. I would strongly encourage future students to apply for the scholarship as it is simply an invaluable experience that you definitely do not want to miss out on.