Stephanie White

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Gullane

Clonakilty,

Co. Cork.

Head of Trainee Recruitment,

Byrne Wallace,

88 Harcourt Street,

Dublin 2.

20th October 2016.

Dear Sir or Madam,

My name is Stephanie White. I am a final year Law and French student from University College Cork and I wish to apply for the trainee solicitor programme.

For me, being a solicitor has always been a natural career choice, and law was always the area of study I wanted to pursue. I believe that law provides and needs to provide the necessary structure and framework in society and equally in an ever changing and sometimes volatile commercial world. I am intrigued by the legal discipline and how such a diverse range of issues can all be related back to that one word – ‘law’. On reflection I think a practice moot court in Transition Year instilled in me the ambition to practice law. I have always had a sense of justice and fairness from a young age, and remember vividly my sense of shock and outrage at the massacre of hundreds during the Beslan School Siege in Chechnya in 2004. These childhood impressions have now developed into a deeper understanding and appreciation for the rule of law as the bedrock of our society.

I am attracted to Byrne Wallace because of its reputation as one of the leading Irish and international law firms, which would therefore allow me the opportunity to work with great solicitors and have exposure to a diverse client base. My research has also highlighted the firm’s approach as priding itself in finding innovative but critically practical solutions to clients issues which I think fits well with my own approach to problem solving. As a potential trainee, I find the recent accolade of ‘Law Firm of the Year 2016’ at the Irish Law Awards to be very inspiring and reassurance that as Byrne Wallace continues to grow their commitment to excellence will be unfaltering. This is important to me, as is, the expectation that from the outset I take responsibility for and am accountable for the work I do and the shaping of my own career direction.

While I am firm in my conviction to pursue law as a career path, I did contemplate a career in management consultancy as the world of business and how organisations work has always interested me. I studied Business for my Leaving Certificate and studied Commerce and French for a year at UCC before switching to law. Merging law and commerce is a natural fit for me. Although I am undecided as to which area of commercial law I want to specialise in, the wide range of practice areas within Byrne Wallace would be is an advantage in helping to find my career direction. This is a really exciting prospect for me.

As a law undergraduate in UCC I have had opportunities to hear at first hand great legal minds speak, ranging from experts in specific fields through to Supreme Court judges visiting our faculty and giving talks, as well as becoming involved with different societies. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in college in Cork. However, without a doubt the best part of my academic experience so far has been my Erasmus year in Strasbourg. It was a special year filled with many events and opportunities but equally had some very difficult and testing times. I can confidently say that it changed me as a person, I matured and developed a strong sense of my own identity and proved myself capable of adapting outside of my comfort zone.

Living in Strasbourg, a European legal hub, meant that I could regularly attend hearings at the ECHR, attend the World Democracy Forum and meet dignitaries such as Emily O’Reilly the European Ombudsman at the Council Of Europe. Furthermore, I secured an internship with the European Centre for Law and Justice as a translator and legal researcher. This was a role that pushed and challenged me, but I quickly found my feet. Moreover, I spent a week shadowing the Irish Delegation to the Council of Europe. Watching and absorbing how the judgements of the European Court of Human Rights were implemented and the sanctions Member States incurred should they not enact the findings of the Court was informative and fascinating. This week will always be a highlight of mine.

On a personal note, Erasmus was a formative year for me. I learnt how to live with the fallout of violent terrorist attacks within France as a State of Emergency was declared. I navigated the ‘difficulties’ of French bureaucracy and mastered my law lectures through French. All of those challenges played a part in developing who I am today, and I am very proud of what I achieved during my time abroad. It made me more resilient and confident, improved my French language skills hugely and above all expanded my horizons. This proven ability to adapt to changing surroundings, and succeeding in a new culture augers well for my ability to grow from your trainee programme to be an effective and accomplished solicitor.

Following my Erasmus I successfully completed an internship with the Legal Aid Board in a law centre in Cork and gained insight into the working life of a busy solicitor, from the long hours to the difficulties encountered in resolving disputes. Although I thoroughly enjoyed my time with the Legal Aid Board, it did solidify my preference in pursuing corporate law.

Having spent years working in the hospitality industry, I have developed my communication and people skills and I really enjoy working as part of a team. I am comfortable assuming responsibility and I believe my integrity and trustworthiness are part of the reason that I am consistently given roles of accountability. In Fernhill House Hotel I was one of the senior waitresses and receptionists, often in charge of leading a full dinner service or wedding reception. I am at ease in this environment, I enjoy the challenge and I have the utmost respect for our clients and their needs. I understand the importance of empathy when listening to customers’ requests and meeting their expectations to the highest standard.

My honest and understanding nature was important when I was chosen to be a peer mentor in secondary school, to provide an example to younger students and also be sympathetic ear to listen to any of their issues or concerns. As it happened, bullying was rife that particular year and helping to negate that situation was a learning experience for me. It reinforced how affected people are by disputes and how important it is to resolve them in a timely and effective manner.

I love sport and have participated in netball, hockey, horse-riding and swam competitively. I am an avid sports fan with a particular interest in rugby and GAA and spend many Saturdays at the side of a pitch cheering on family and friends.

Music is the love of my life, my Dad introduced me to music at a young age and we have since spent hours bonding over artists new and old, from the Pixies to the Spice Girls. I can play the piano and the flute, although not as well as perhaps I would like to, and have always saved my hard earned money to buy albums, attend concerts and festivals. Wherever there is music, I will usually be found!

I know the value of money and hard work. I have balanced academics and part-time work since the age of fifteen and have actively supported myself financially as best I could. Earning my own money has helped me to fund my travel experiences and so far I have navigated through Thailand, Europe and parts of America and still have a long list yet to complete.

My friends would describe me as loyal, funny and outgoing with a slightly competitive edge!

Please find my CV attached and I look forward to hearing from you soon. I am available for interview anytime.

Yours faithfully,

Stephanie White.