

Robyn Andree Painter

Painterlegal@gmail.com

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/robypainter/>

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Principal/Owner, Painter Legal, LLC (March 2025-pres.)

- Founder of boutique law firm specializing in full-service disability and civil rights representation for families with children in schools, in disciplinary proceedings, or in the criminal justice system.
- Educational civil rights law; tort practice; criminal appellate practice; mediation; third-party neutral investigations for educational entities; small business and non-profit services.

Assistant Director, Borrowers Defense, Federal Student Aid, U.S. Department of Education (Jan. 2023- Feb. 2025)

- Part of senior leadership team for newer, functional area of FSA's enforcement capacity; Advised Borrowers Defense director and other senior leaders on the sub-agency's decision letter template, including factually novel applications.
- Developed and implemented language for the office's decision letters that directed unsuccessful applicants to other forms of potential relief, such as total and permanent disability status, false certification, and unpaid refunds.
- Oversaw the letter writing quality and adjudication output of sixty-five staff attorneys; created a bi-weekly training meeting to keep staff informed of best practices, emerging trends in applications, and changes to protocol.
- Developed several protocols concerning the production of administrative decision letters, including quality control for letters, final review of letters, and procedures for processing different types of applications.
- Attended weekly substantive meetings with the Office of the Undersecretary and Office of General Counsel to discuss legal issues that were presented by group findings concerning school-specific borrower defense applications and the new and evolving work processes of the Borrowers Defense Group.

Supervisory General Attorney and General Attorney, U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Atlanta, GA (2015-Jan. 2023)

- Lead investigator on District-wide compliance review on the issue of restraint and seclusion of students with emotional-behavioral and mental health differences. Supervised a team of 4 other attorneys, conducted 2 week-long site visits to interview over 60 informants, reviewed and assessed the District's seclusion facilities, and conducted public parent fora. The district assigned to my team was a large, urban school district educating over 65,000 students and operating two special day schools for students impacted by severe organic and mental health impairments.
- Member of our office's mediation team. Specialty in successful mediation of complex Title IX sexual assault/harassment cases, as well as emotionally charged Section 504/Title II cases involving restraint/isolation of students or direct threat allegations. Mentored other staff in mediation techniques.

Program Attorney, Mexican Capital Legal Assistance Program (MCLAP), Tucson, AZ (2014 -2015)

- Review of multi-week *voir dire* in death penalty case on direct appeal. Researched and briefed issues related to Batson challenges, Witherspoon screening of jurors, fair representation of non-native English speakers in the jury venire, and prosecutorial misconduct. Research into relevant jurisdiction's jury pool practices. Extensive collaboration with co-counsel remotely.

Staff Attorney and Internship Coordinator, Georgia Appellate Practice and Educational Resource Center, Atlanta, GA (2008-2013)

- Successfully coordinated the 2013 litigation of GA's lethal injection secrecy act with attorneys around the country, and appeared as lead attorney in GA state court, obtaining a stay of execution in *Hill v. Owens*. This victory led to an effective ten-month moratorium on the use of the death penalty in the state of GA.
- Conducted week-long evidentiary hearing on issue of intellectual disability in U.S. Dist. Court, Southern District of GA, including use of expert witness testimony about my client's mental health.

Attorney, The Defender Association, Seattle, WA (2006-2008)

- Represented clients facing civil commitment at state psychiatric hospitals, including a week-long jury trial on the issue of likely danger to self. Conducted hundreds of bench trials on issues of danger to self, danger to others, and incapacity for self-care.
- Represented clients charged with misdemeanor offenses in mental health court, drug court, and District court. Successfully carried a caseload of about 125 clients with whom I established relationships of trust based on in-person conversations, jail visits, and creative and knowledgeable litigation of their cases.
- Successfully handled several misdemeanor and civil commitments appeals resulting in an over 50% reversal rate of the trial court verdict.

Judicial Law Clerk, Hon. Marsha J. Pechman, U.S. District Judge Western District of WA, Seattle, WA (2004-2006)

- Researched and drafted bench memos and orders, managed docket, participated in hearings and conferences related to litigation. Special focus on civil litigation, employment litigation.
- Managed *pro se* docket, including several petitioners with mental health conditions that impacted their legal cases.
- Supervised legal interns, editing their work product for submission to J. Pechman. Mentored students on legal writing and research.

EDUCATION

J.D., Georgetown University Law Center, Washington, D.C. (2004), *Cum Laude*

A.B., History and Romance Languages, University of Georgia, Athens, GA (1998), *Summa Cum Laude*

SIGNIFICANT VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES & COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

- Peace Corps Volunteer, Madagascar, (1999-2001).
- Troop Leader, Girl Scout Cadette Troop 16191, Decatur, GA (August 2020-present).

FOREIGN LANGUAGES: Proficient in Spanish, French and Malagasy