



VERMONT STATE COLLEGES

Office of External Programs
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GET CREDIT FOR WHAT YOU ALREADY KNOW

Dear APL Students,

Attached please find the OEP sample portfolio of Patsy Starr Smith. We hope that seeing and reading this portfolio will be helpful to you as you design your own.

Please note:

Patsy's portfolio is NOT a perfect portfolio. It is a well-done portfolio, but there are things missing, a few mistakes, and other areas that could be improved. The reason we want you to have hers as a sample is so that you can see which parts and areas are good or even great, and which issues prevented Patsy from getting some of the requested credit.

You will evaluate her requests when you are part of a 'mock' Advanced Standing Committee. After your deliberations and decisions, you will find out what the actual committee awarded Patsy!

We hope you will find this useful.

OEP Staff

SAMPLE

Committee Worksheet

Rev 9/2/11

Student's Name: Patsy Starr Smith

Primary Area of Request: Business/ General Studies

Area of Study	Credit Requested	Credit Granted	Comments
Office Procedures	3		
Introduction to Ethics	3		
Administrative Legal Procedures	3		
Research in the Legal Field	3		
Principles of Supervision	3		
Word Processing	3		
Microcomputer Applications	3		
Spreadsheets	3		
Introduction to the Internet	3		
Advertising and Sales	3		
Small Business Practicum	6		
Guitar 1	3		
Fundamentals of Music	3		
Folk Music	3		
Death and Dying	3		
Introduction to Psychology	3		
Early Childhood Care and Education	3		
Child Development	3		
Introduction to Special Education	3		
Introduction to Literature	3		

SAMPLE

PORTFOLIO FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF PRIOR LEARNING

Patsy Starr Smith

Patsy Starr Smith
10 Middle Road
Waterbury Center VT 05677

May 15, 2011
Montpelier APL

Date of Birth: July 1, 1961

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AREA OF STUDY

CREDIT

Office Procedures

3

REQUEST

Source of Learning	Learning Components	Documentation
Miller & Lehman, Attorneys at Law 1985 – 1990	Demonstrate proficiency in the use and maintenance of a variety of office machines such as copiers, fax machines, computers, laminating machines, postage meter, FAX machines, multi-line telephone systems, etc., to perform general clerical duties.	41 45 47
Pandora's Box 1992 – 1998	Greet incoming guests and staff in a customer-friendly manner as they visit the office reception area in order to answer general questions or route individuals to the appropriate persons for assistance.	49
	Answer telephone calls and route them to the appropriate person or the individual requested in order to provide good service.	52
Patsy's Legal Research 2002 - present	Create and process business documents such as memos and letters in order to present a professional appearance.	55
	Entering data into the computer to keep information up to date.	
	Maintain files in order to manage the flow of paperwork.	
	Collect, compile, file and/or distribute all daily correspondence and incoming mail in order to maintain an organized system.	
	Inventory and order office supplies to ensure office is equipped with adequate supply of materials.	
	Attend staff meetings and record meeting minutes to be distributed to office staff members.	
	Manage time effectively so as to complete all necessary work.	
	Maintain confidentiality to ensure protection of sensitive information.	
	Report to supervisor regarding the status of special projects and ongoing responsibilities on a regular basis to keep track of progress and demonstrate accountability.	

AREA OF STUDY

CREDIT

Introduction to Ethics

3

REQUEST

Source of Learning	Learning Components	Documentation
<p>Miller & Lehman, Attorneys at Law 1985 - 1990</p> <p>Pandora's Box 1992 - 1998</p> <p>Patsy's Legal Research 2002 - present</p>	<p>Discuss the various ethical issues that come up in the workplace in order to understand how to handle them.</p> <p>Define ethical challenges for different levels of staff to guide supervisees.</p> <p>Explain and practice ethical decision making in order to act appropriately.</p> <p>Set up workplace policies that enhance and enforce ethical behavior by all staff to maintain an ethical business.</p> <p>Explain confidentiality rules and concerns in order to avoid legal and ethical breaches.</p> <p>Explore moral and ethical principles from a variety of points of view in order to understand how they are related.</p> <p>Practice ethical behavior when dealing with issues such as ethnic diversity, gender equity, and ageism in the workplace in order to provide a safe working environment.</p>	<p>41</p> <p>45</p>

NAME: Patsy Starr Smith

AREA OF STUDY

CREDIT
REQUEST

Administrative Legal Procedures

3

Source of Learning	Learning Components	Documentation
Miller &Lehman, Attorneys at Law 1985 – 1990 Patsy's Legal Research 2002 - present	Demonstrate professional office skills such as appropriately answering the phone, greeting clients, etc., to support the attorneys.	41
	Schedule office and court appointments for clients to maintain an effective schedule.	45
	Summarize clients' needs for attorneys in order to improve efficiency.	47
	Calculate billing statements to mail to clients in order to keep billing up to date.	49
	Employ appropriate legal filing system for office coordination.	75
	Prepare legal documents, correspondence, and contracts to run a professional office.	
	Prepare pleadings for attorneys in order to assist them.	
	Assemble documents required for family court proceedings to ensure that all necessary paperwork is prepared.	
	Know requirements for documentation for corporations to improve office functioning.	
	Comprehend terminology of the insurance industry in order to understand these areas of the law.	
	Analyze a variety of policies and other documents for use in litigation so as to be up to date on all matters.	
	Determine proper legal documentation necessary for law cases to keep moving cases forward.	
	Appraise litigation events related to case matters to prepare for each step in the process.	
	Understand the process and necessities of title searches and other real estate matters in order to assist attorneys.	
		3

AREA OF STUDY

CREDIT
REQUEST

Research in the Legal Field

3

Source of Learning	Learning Components	Documentation
Miller & Lehmann, Attorneys at Law 1985 – 1990	Use legal knowledge and skills as well as legal reference material in order to obtain appropriate information.	41
	Identify which source is required and appropriate in order to find different types of information.	45
		47
Patsy's Legal Research 2002 - present	Use reference materials in order to perform legal research related to areas such as the insurance industry, land records, real estate transactions, municipal records, and the like.	75
	Demonstrate proper methods of citation in order to prepare documents correctly.	
	Utilize computerized research methods (LEXIS/NEXIS) and Westlaw in order to locate information required by attorneys and other clients.	
	Compose and prepare legal documents, including memoranda, briefs, and contracts for approval and use by attorneys.	
	Analyze situations, facts, and the area of laws pertaining in order to conduct proper research.	
	Analyze requests for information received to prepare proper responses.	
		4

NAME: Patsy Starr Smith

AREA OF STUDY

CREDIT
REQUEST

Principles of Supervision

3

Source of Learning	Learning Components	Documentation
Miller & Lehman, Attorneys at Law 1985 – 1990 Pandora's Box 1992-1998	Describe a variety of management and supervision theories in order to be a successful supervisor.	41
	Design and conduct employee orientations to familiarize staff with the philosophy, policies, and procedures of the organization.	45
	Interview, select, hire, and if necessary, dismiss staff in order to fill the position with the best person.	47
	Create and oversee staff schedules for smooth operation of the office.	49
	Delegate tasks to appropriate staff in order to efficiently complete all required work.	52
	Conduct performance appraisals in order to provide recognition to staff for good performance and give constructive criticism or direction when needed.	
	Coach and counsel staff regarding employee relations issues and impose disciplinary action when necessary in order to support good performance.	
	Assess training needs for staff and the organization in order to develop training needs.	
	Develop in-house training opportunities in order for the office to provide excellent service to clients and staff.	
	Train staff in time management strategies, ethical and professional behavior, confidentiality issues, and service strategies to have a successful staff.	
	Plan and facilitate weekly staff meetings to keep staff informed and up to date.	
	Inform staff about employee relations issues and perform disciplinary action if necessary to help staff function at their best.	
		5

NAME: Patsy Starr Smith

AREA OF STUDY

CREDIT
REQUEST

Word Processing

3

Source of Learning	Learning Components	Documentation
Miller & Lehman, Attorneys at Law 1985 – 90	Demonstrate procedures for editing documents in order to manipulate text in word processing.	41
	Demonstrate steps to formatting documents before and after text input in order to change the appearance of a document.	45
Pandora's Box 1992 – 1998	Describe various types of file management in order to utilize space and to save and retrieve files.	50
Patsy's Legal Research 2002 - present	Describe various types of file management in order to utilize space and to save and retrieve files.	55
	Demonstrate procedures for entering data in order to produce word documents than can showcase data.	
	Demonstrate strategies for inputting and utilizing tables in order to clarify and add emphasis to information.	
	Describe various methods for printing word documents in order to provide hard copy for various uses.	
	Describe various ways of using tabs within a document in order to create a repeating format with simplified key strokes.	
	Demonstrate the use of spell checking and thesaurus in order to aid in proofreading documents.	
	Describe the uses of various tools bars in order to customize desktop for personal use.	
		6

AREA OF STUDY

CREDIT
REQUEST

Microcomputer Applications

3

Source of Learning	Learning Components	Documentation
Miller & Lehmann, Attorneys at Law 1985 – 1990	Identify and use the components of the computer such as the monitor, keyboard, hard drive in order to operate a microcomputer.	41
Self Taught	Describe and demonstrate the application of system operations and how they interact with software applications in order to utilize the computer to its fullest.	45
Pandora's Box 1992 – 1998	Demonstrate strategies for proper file and disk management in order to save documents, spreadsheets, databases, and presentations.	50
Patsy's Legal Research 2002 - present	Explain the requirements of virus protection in order to preserve computer data.	55
	Describe techniques for back-up computer information to establish a system for saving information.	
	Operate systems for database software in order to design a file, add and edit records, generate reports, and select certain records from files.	
	Demonstrate the use of word processing programs such as spell check, compose, retrieve and print in order to produce a variety of documents.	
	Apply procedures for spreadsheets software such as alphabetic, numeric, and alphanumeric cell entries, values, formulas, column-width, column and row headings, deleting, and inserting in order to design a spreadsheet.	
	Explain legal and ethical information processing standards in a professional setting in order to protect confidentiality and data theft.	
	Access the Internet to navigate the World Wide Web in order to gather information.	
		7

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AREA OF STUDY

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REQUEST

Spreadsheets

3

Source of Learning	Learning Components	Documentation
Miller & Lehman, Attorneys at Law 1985 – 1990	Use spreadsheet operations such as importing data and graphs, formatting columns and rows, copying data, cutting, pasting and inserting rows and columns in order to produce professional spreadsheets.	41
	Produce neat and comprehensive spreadsheets so that they are easy to read.	45
Pandora's Box 1992 – 1998	Generate complex spreadsheets including reports that collate data from multiple file sheets so that new data can be automatically updated.	50
Patsy's Legal Research 2002 - present	Use mathematical functions in order to tabulate data.	55
	Assess and compare a variety of spreadsheets in order to decide which type to use.	
	Discuss new and upcoming spreadsheet capabilities in order to assess how they would impact business efficiency.	
	Employ hyperlinks and customized formulas to improve document efficiency.	
	Access, display and print specific sections of spreadsheets in order to simplify presentations that use spreadsheets.	
	Use equations in order to calculate and generate new data files.	
	Use multiple tables in EXCEL in order to organize data.	
	Demonstrate how to use EXCEL with other applications in order to increase effectiveness.	
	Create macros in order to prevent errors in repetition and streamline work flow.	
		8

NAME: Patsy Starr Smith

AREA OF STUDY

CREDIT
REQUEST

Introduction to the Internet

3

Source of Learning	Learning Components	Documentation
Pandora's Box 1992 – 1998	Describe the history and development of the Internet in order to gauge its influence on today's world.	52
Self Taught	Demonstrate how to use Internet tools in order to navigate, search, find directories, and share information on the Internet.	55
Patsy's Legal Research 2002 - present	Employ Internet skills and searches in order to find specific information related to retail procurement and sales and to observe trends. Apply virus detection and security procedures in order to perform necessary computer maintenance. Explain how to use the Internet to undertake legal searches.	
		9

AREA OF STUDY

CREDIT
REQUEST

Advertising and Sales

3

Source of Learning	Learning Components	Documentation
Pandora's Box 1992 – 1998	Identify best practices in sales and marketing in order to utilize successful marketing techniques to best meet business needs.	52
Patsy's Legal Research 2002 - present	Identify theories of advertising in order to capitalize on seasonal and special need opportunities.	57
	Identify strategies for targeting business needs in order to set advertising goals.	
	Create merchandise displays inside the store and in store windows to showcase merchandise effectively.	
	Set up store windows to entice potential customers to enter the store.	
	Use the internet to research and order new products.	
	Employ the internet in order to keep abreast of trends in the fashion and gift industry.	
	Describe the steps involved in creating advertisements in order to select the appropriate type of advertising media.	
	Describe elements of effective advertising brochures in order to create an informative advertising tool and identify markets for distribution.	
	Describe elements of a successful sales process in order for sales procedures to be most effective.	
	Explain the importance of good interpersonal and effective sales skills in order to make the customer comfortable.	
	Create a web site to advertise small home business.	
	Design stationary, ads, business cards, and a small brochure for businesses in order to attract business.	
		10

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AREA OF STUDY

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REQUEST

Small Business Practicum

6

Source of Learning	Learning Components	Documentation
Miller & Lehman, Attorneys at Law 1985 - 1990	Apply customer service skills in order to promote a professional business.	52
Pandora's Box 1992 – 1998	Describe procedures for cash register balancing in order to ring sales accurately.	55
Patsy's Legal Research 2002 - present	Perform basic business accounting functions to assure proper financial management.	
	Describe strategies for price reductions in order to promote sales.	
	Develop strategies and marketing plans in order to improve business.	
	Create marketing plans with radio and newspapers reaching targeted markets to enhance established business.	
	Create and use customer service systems and approaches to exceed current and potential customer expectation to win customer loyalty.	
	Display merchandise in a pleasing and attractive manner to increase sales.	
	Organize promotional special events to increase customer awareness.	
	Analyze retail management problems to improve customer satisfaction.	
	Examine pricing, credit options, and merchandising techniques to help a small business to increase sales.	
	Use the internet in order to obtain information about sales trends such as colors, novelty items, fashion developments, and styles.	
	Investigate state regulations related to the set-up of a small consulting business as a sole proprietorship in order to do it correctly.	
	Review and analyze targeted business market to enhance business.	
	Arrange electronic systems to manage accounts payable and receivable.	
	Employ use of computers to enhance business needs and business communications, especially on-line.	
	Follow proper state regulations in order to be in legal compliance.	11

AREA OF STUDY

CREDIT
REQUEST

Guitar 1

3

Source of Learning	Learning Components	Documentation
Self Taught	<p>Explain the structure and parts of guitars, both acoustic and electric, in order to understand the way in which they work, and to maintain the instrument's performance quality.</p> <p>Demonstrate various techniques using a pick or fingers in order to acquire a variety of sounds from the instrument.</p> <p>Explain the techniques to attain various chords in order to acquire sounds appropriate to the piece being played.</p> <p>Demonstrate good techniques for regular practice in order to strengthen fingers, follow a song, and maintain melody, harmony and rhythm, and improve skills.</p> <p>Identify chord symbols and music notation in order to read and follow written music for guitar.</p> <p>Explain musical terminology and symbols in order to read music and to play various types of music.</p> <p>Describe fundamental music theories, particularly in relation to guitar music, in order to increase an understanding of all music.</p> <p>Compare and contrast music styles and genres in which the guitar plays a part, such as rock, folk, blues, jazz and classical, in order to have a broad understanding of the place of the guitar in music.</p> <p>Discuss the history of the guitar over the centuries, in order to understand the development and variations of this particular instrument.</p> <p>Demonstrate the techniques to play a variety of selections of music using the guitar as the primary instrument, the bass line, and as accompaniment to vocals in order to show the versatility of the instrument.</p> <p>Evaluate various types and styles of guitar music and musicians in order to appreciate the breadth of this instrument.</p>	<p>58</p> <p>64</p> <p>12</p>

AREA OF STUDY

CREDIT
REQUEST

Fundamentals of Music

3

Source of Learning	Learning Components	Documentation
Self Taught	<p>Demonstrate techniques to play and perform fundamental music selections on a keyboard, such as melody and chords, in order to show an understanding of musical principles.</p> <p>Demonstrate techniques to sing and perform fundamental music selections in order to show an understanding of the principles of voice.</p> <p>Demonstrate techniques for regular and consistent practice in order to demonstrate the importance of exercises in developing skills.</p> <p>Demonstrate the application of various rhythm patterns in music selections in order to show how rhythm is an essential element of any music.</p> <p>Explain and demonstrate the ways melody and harmony are applied in various music selections in order to understand the purpose of different melody and harmony patterns.</p> <p>Compare and contrast major and minor scales in various music selections in order to show how they affect the quality and feeling of a musical piece.</p> <p>Explain the use of various chord patterns and progressions, such as triads and seventh chords, in order to understand how different chords affect a work's overall form.</p> <p>Demonstrate techniques for sight-reading in order to understand and perform musical selections with ease.</p> <p>Create simple musical pieces using the best practices of melody, harmony and chord applications, and rhythm, in order to understand the fundamental requirements of music composition.</p> <p>Explain the standard music terms and symbols in order to read and understand such things as key, time and style.</p> <p>Evaluate the characteristics of various music styles and genres in order to develop an appreciation for different music forms.</p>	<p>58</p> <p>64</p> <p>13</p>

NAME: Patsy Starr Smith

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REQUEST

Folk Music

3

Source of Learning	Learning Components	Documentation
Self Taught	<p>Explain the history of American and British folk music in order to understand how songs describe the everyday life of average people.</p> <p>Describe various types of folk music such as ballads, sea chanteys, bluegrass, work songs, delta blues, spirituals, cowboy songs, in order to appreciate the different forms of the music.</p> <p>Provide examples of the ballads collected by James Francis Child and other collectors of folk music to understand how these collections have influenced future musicians.</p> <p>Describe examples of songs that have changed their lyrics over time and in different locations, and tunes that have very different lyrics, in order to understand how folk music has evolved to meet various needs.</p> <p>Demonstrate the fundamental chords and chord progressions used in traditional folk music and how they are played on different stringed instruments such as guitar, autoharp and mountain dulcimer in order to accompany a folk song.</p> <p>Explain how melody and harmony vocals are sung in traditional folk music in order to sing solo or as part of a duet, trio or group.</p> <p>Describe the differences between major and minor keys in traditional folk music to understand how this can affect the meaning or emotion of a song.</p> <p>Explain variations in tempo and rhythm in traditional folk music in order to use them appropriately for the particular song.</p> <p>Provide examples of a wide variety of traditional folk songs, with melody, harmony and chords, and all verses and chorus, in order to maintain a song list for a variety of purposes and venues.</p>	<p>58</p> <p>64</p> <p>14</p>

AREA OF STUDY

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REQUEST

Death and Dying

3

Source of Learning	Learning Components	Documentation
Self Taught	<p>Identify the theory behind the five stages of grief in order to recognize that these grieving emotions are normal and fit within stages of no particular order.</p> <p>Describe the theory behind Grief Work to understand the fundamental differences to the five stages of grief often used in treatment.</p> <p>Describe the elements of the acronym TEAR in order to understand its importance to the fundamentals of Grief Work.</p> <p>Identify various possible physical manifestations of grief in order to consider different avenues for treatment.</p> <p>Identify post-traumatic stress disorder in grief to take steps to heal from the trauma and gauge success.</p> <p>Identify the characteristics of unresolved grief in order to assess condition and strategy for healing.</p> <p>Identify obstacles to the grieving process in order to take steps to resolve the obstacle and continue forward through the grieving journey.</p> <p>Identify fundamental theories on the use of medication in order to analyze the opposing positions when making a decision on medication use.</p> <p>Identify the availability of support systems in order to affect how a person copes with grief.</p> <p>Describe cross-cultural responses to grief in order to recognize 'normal' behaviors.</p> <p>Describe how the growth process affects grief in order to understand children's reaction to death and loss.</p>	<p>66</p> <p>15</p>

NAME: Patsy Starr Smith

AREA OF STUDY

CREDIT
REQUEST

Introduction to Psychology

3

Source of Learning	Learning Components	Documentation
<p>The Children's Garden 1981 - 1985</p> <p>Self Taught</p>	<p>Identify the origin and development of psychology as a social science in order to understand the study of human behavior.</p> <p>Describe current approaches to the study of psychology including biological, humanistic, cognitive, behavioral, and psychoanalytical theories in order to recognize how they compare and contrast.</p> <p>Identify differences between perception and sensation in order to understand human behavior.</p> <p>Define theories of intelligence in order to understand how it affects behavior.</p> <p>Describe scientific research methods and the use of statistics as means to obtain accurate data.</p> <p>Describe the importance of ethics in order to research and interpret data objectively.</p> <p>Explain the debate between "Nurture vs. Nature" in order to understand how it affects early childhood educational approaches.</p> <p>Define theories of personality in order to understand the relationships among different behaviors.</p> <p>Describe theories of emotions in order to recognize motivation for behaviors.</p> <p>Explain the effects of physical disabilities in order to understand social and emotional difficulties.</p> <p>Describe behaviorist, cognitive, developmental, and social learning theories in order to show how they can apply to language and cognitive development.</p> <p>Explain the role of culture, social values and social systems in order to be aware of their importance in mental health.</p> <p>Describe the different professions in the area of psychology such as counselors, teachers, therapists, psycho-analysts, mental health counselors, and child care staff in order to explain how each role affects clients.</p>	<p>67</p> <p>16</p>

NAME: Patsy Starr Smith

AREA OF STUDY

CREDIT
REQUEST

Early Childhood Care and Education

3

Source of Learning	Learning Components	Documentation
The Children's Garden 1981 – 1985 Self Taught	<p>Identify early childhood education theories in order to apply them to foster learning, growth and development in infants and pre-school children.</p> <p>Describe theories of play and how to apply them to develop age appropriate activities for toddlers and small children.</p> <p>Describe typical needs of children in the areas of health, safety, curriculum, learning environments, and behavior management in order to assure that the day care center meets those needs.</p> <p>Recognize appropriate speech, behavior and development to understand physical and emotional growth patterns.</p> <p>Arrange the day care rooms to incorporate activities for all senses for explorative learning.</p> <p>Discuss routines, policies and goals with parents and other day care staff to keep communication open.</p> <p>Apply age appropriate strategies for conflict resolution.</p> <p>Record and be aware of medical needs and immunizations for each child so as to meet all regulations regarding health matters.</p> <p>Apply state licensing regulations to provide a safe early childhood care setting.</p> <p>Organize small and large group activities for individual student participation to support each child's learning.</p> <p>Use colors, numbers and letters in daily activities to enhance memory.</p> <p>Practice different communication styles with children to find individual comfort levels.</p>	<p>69</p> <p>71</p> <p>73</p> <p>76</p> <p>77</p> <p>17</p>

NAME: Patsy Starr Smith

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Child Development

3

Source of Learning	Learning Components	Documentation
The Childrens' Garden 1981 – 1985	Describe the characteristics of children from conception to pre-adolescence in order to obtain and understand developmental theories.	69
Self Taught	Explain and compare a variety of developmental theories, including social theories and behavioral theories, including various approaches such as Montessori, Steiner, etc. that have influenced today's educational practices in day care environments.	71 73 76
	Identify issues in child development pertaining to gender, race, ethnicity, and class in order to support children appropriately.	77
	Name ways in which children develop motor skills, language skills, and cognitive skills in order to evaluate if the skills are age appropriate.	
	Describe the principles of what 'normal' development is in order to monitor the rate of development in children.	
	Describe the principles of environmental influences on developing children in order to meet their needs.	
	Discuss the ways in which genetics can influence the social, physical, and psychological development of children in order to understand each child's unique characteristics.	
	Read articles in psychological and educational journals in order to be aware of changes and recent developments in the field of child development.	
		18

NAME: Patsy Starr Smith

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Introduction to Special Education

3

Source of Learning	Learning Components	Documentation
Self Taught 1998 to present	<p>Recognize developmental delays in order to get early intervention.</p> <p>Use anti-bias language for the purpose of promoting acceptance among all children, such as “using a Wheelchair” rather than “confined to a wheelchair”.</p> <p>Organize indoor and outdoor areas in order to meet the needs of children with disabilities.</p> <p>Analyze different federal and state laws that pertain to special needs children in order to get the best services.</p> <p>Plan a physical and social environment in order for the child to feel competent and confident.</p> <p>Establish realistic goals for a child with special needs so that the child can reach success.</p> <p>Select appropriate activities for children with differing abilities to ensure safety at all times.</p> <p>Value the independence needed in all abilities in order to have the chance to select his or her own materials and actions.</p> <p>Discuss necessary accommodations with teachers, Education Department staff, paraeducators, and other school staff in order to ensure the best environment for a child with special needs.</p> <p>Collaborate with special education staff in the development of Life Skills portfolios to ensure that learning outcomes, IEP goals and student progress are linked to one another and can be measured.</p>	73
		19

NAME: Patsy Starr Smith

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Introduction to Literature

3

Source of Learning	Learning Components	Documentation
Self Taught	<p>Name many American and foreign authors and their most popular books in order to recommend books to others.</p> <p>Describe how a writer builds a novel in order to keep the reader's interest.</p> <p>Explain the different types of literature in order to classify them: novels, non-fiction, poetry, fiction, drama, children's books, romance novels, scientific works, histories and biographies.</p> <p>Distinguish between different writing styles in order to know their effect, such as emotions, fact sharing, opinion, and ideas.</p> <p>Be aware of the historical and cultural settings of various works of literature in order to discuss these with other readers.</p>	74
		20

Degree Plan

Patsy Starr Smith

Associate Degree in Liberal Studies

Community College of Vermont

Core Competencies:

First Semester Seminar	to be taken	3	
Microcomputer Applications	requested from OEP	3	
Effective Speaking	to be taken	3	
English Composition	CCV, Fall 2005	3	
Mathematical Concepts	to be taken	3	
Research in the Legal Field	requested from OEP	3	18

Areas of Inquiry

Natural History of Vermont	CCV, Fall 2005	3	
Fundamentals of Music	requested from OEP	3	
Guitar I	requested from OEP	3	
Introduction to Psychology	requested from OEP	3	
Child Development	requested from OEP	3	15

Integrative Approaches

Modern World History	CCV, Summer 2005	3	
Seminar in Educational Inquiry	to be taken	3	6

Liberal Studies Courses and Electives

Assessment of Prior Learning	CCV, Spring 2006	3	
Office Procedures	requested from OEP	3	
Introduction to Ethics	requested from OEP	3	
Administrative Legal Procedures	requested from OEP	3	
Principles of Supervision	requested from OEP	3	
Word Processing	requested from OEP	3	
Introduction to the Internet	requested from OEP	3	
Advertising and Sales	requested from OEP	3	
Small Business Practicum	requested from OEP	6	
Folk Music	requested from OEP	3	
Death and Dying	requested from OEP	3	
Early Childhood Care and Education	requested from OEP	3	
Introduction to Special Education	requested from OEP	3	
Introduction to Literature	requested from OEP	3	
Spreadsheets	requested from OEP	3	48

Total Credits in Degree

87

ESSAY

Patsy Starr Smith

My life has been harder than that of a lot of other people I know, and I have also had some things happen that have been better than for other people. I have always tried to make the best of anything that came my way, handling the problems the best way I can, and appreciating the good things. I have a basically good attitude and I like people, and I think that has helped me along the way.

I grew up near Erie, Pennsylvania, on the farm that had been a working dairy farm in my grandfather's day. By the time my father and his brothers and sisters came along, the farm was going under. They sold the herd and sold off most of the land. My father took over the farmhouse when my grandmother died and my grandfather went to live with my aunt. We always had a few heifers, and I was expected to help care for the animals while I was growing up.

My growing up years were very hard in some ways, and good in other ways. My mother was an alcoholic and left us when I was only three. My older sister was fifteen at the time, and she took over the care of my brother, who was ten. My brother was born with a lot of problems, which we later learned were caused by Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, because our mother drank while she was pregnant with him. My sister went on to become a nurse, and has taken care of my brother all these years. My dad was a good person, and loved us a lot, but he had to work long hours to take care of us so we never saw as much of him as we wanted to. When I was nine my dad got married to a woman who had three children of her own. She never seemed to want to pay much attention to me, so I sort of grew up on my own. My sister lived nearby so she helped me out when I had questions, but she was so busy with my brother and nursing school that she couldn't devote as much time to me. I always had a good relationship with my dad, and I knew I was loved. He made enough money to take care of

everything we needed, and his wife was a good cook and took care of the home well. I just didn't get very much guidance.

In high school I started to hang around with a tough crowd. It wasn't long before I started drinking, smoking pot, and skipping school. After a while I dropped out, since my grades weren't very good. I got a job as a chambermaid at a ski area hotel that first winter, then worked at a little stand that sold hamburgers, fries and creemees during the summer. I did that for three years, until I found out that I was pregnant. When my son, Duane, was six months old, I got married to his father. We tried to make a go of it, but we were just too young and not really suited for each other. After we split up, I worked at a day care center for four years. I could bring my son there for free, and I could be with him all day. The only problem was that the pay was so low that I could barely make ends meet.

I am good with people, so the job at the burger stand and the day care job both were good for me. I really liked having contact with people all the time. At the day care center I always tried to see the parents when they would come to pick up their children. I liked to tell them how their child was during the day, and let them know if there were any problems.

One of the day care families was a couple who were both attorneys. I got to know them through the day care, and I liked both of them. One day the mother asked me if I had ever thought about working in an office. I told her I didn't think I could do that because I had not finished high school. She said she thought I could learn quickly, and said they needed to hire a receptionist at their law office.

I thought about it for a few days, and then I went to see them on my day off. This was a huge step for me to take, because I was sure I could never do this kind of work. I thought people who worked in

offices were smart and confident, all the things I didn't think I was. We talked for a long time about my life, what I had done when I was in school, what I thought I would like to do with my life, and what I wanted for my son. These people were the best thing that could have happened to me at that time. They told me they had noticed me right from the beginning at the day care center, and thought I had a lot of potential. They said they would like to give me a chance to make something more out of my life, but that I would have to do a lot of hard work to make it happen.

We figured out a plan for how much they would pay me. It worked out so that I would make a little more than I had been earning at the day care center. I was able to get a subsidy to pay for my son's day care, because my earnings were low enough. The wife was my same size and she offered to give me some dressy clothes to start work, since I only had jeans and t-shirts. They said there was one other condition to their hiring me: I had to get my GED as soon as possible.

I gave my notice at the day care right away. I was sorry to leave, because I loved the children and I worked with some very nice people. I also had learned so much there about educating children, and all the staff at the day care center was encouraged and supported in learning. Duane stayed at the day care, so I went there every day to drop him off and pick him up. That way I was able to stay in touch with everyone. While I was there I gained a lot of knowledge about young children. It helped in raising my son to be in a place where everyone knew about how babies and children were supposed to act. The day care center had a lot of books about child development, children's health, child abuse, children with special needs, and they encouraged us to take the books home to read, or read them while the children were taking their naps. The supervisors made it very clear that we were expected to know about child development. They wanted us to be able to give the best care to the children there, and they believed that we would do that better if we learned through reading along

with learning by doing.

I had always been interested in reading, and I think I developed more of an interest in reading when I was a child since I didn't have as much attention from my father and my step-mother. I could read a book and feel like there were people in my life that I could talk to. The job at the day care taught me that reading could be for learning, as well as for pleasure and escape. Since then I have always been a reader, and I am never without two or three books going at once. I usually have an escape novel of some kind, and then something with facts and information. I read books about history, and science, and classic literature in addition to the escape novels. I have had a library card since I was a young child, and I have taught my children that books are very important. All my children love to read, and most evenings we all sit around the living room with our books, instead of watching television.

The next thing I did after giving my notice at the day care center was to go to the Adult Basic Education office and find out about getting my GED. They were very nice there, and made it all so easy. I took some tests, and they said I could easily pass the tests with very little studying. Six months later I had my GED. I was very proud of myself for that. I had not been out of high school for very long before I realized that I had made a big mistake by quitting. I was always embarrassed about that, and thought it made me less of a person. Now I had a high school equivalency diploma and a job in an office.

The job at the law office was exciting and challenging. I had to learn a lot of new things all at once. I had learned how to type in school, so it was not hard to learn to use their word processor. Back then, computers were not like they are now. When I think about the word processor we used then, compared to what is available now, it seems amazing that we could get any work done at all. At the

time, it was much more efficient than the old typewriters. I discovered that I had a knack for figuring out how to run all the office machines. When something would start working wrong, I could often figure out what was wrong and fix it. Other times I could figure out what was wrong and knew enough to recommend that the repair people come, or that it was time to buy a new one.

I learned a lot about general office procedures. I also learned about the importance of confidentiality. These attorneys had a mixed practice, where they did some divorces and other family court work, some property work, a little probate work, and some criminal defense work. No matter what I learned about other people in the community, I understood right from the first day at that job that I must never let anything I knew get out of the office. If I saw a client on the street, I did not speak to them unless they spoke to me first.

I worked there for five years. During that time the practice grew, they started having a computer consultant come in and help us with setting up entirely new systems. I ended up being the person in charge of the computers because I really liked figuring out new things and which programs were best for our office. I became good at it. The practice also included a new partner, and we needed to hire more paralegals and office staff, and I became the supervisor of three people. My worst experience as a supervisor was when I had to fire someone for her unethical behavior. The person I hired to replace her turned out to be the best employee in the office, and she took over when I left. When this was going on, I got very interested in the idea of ethics, and got some books from the library so I could learn more. This was one of the most interesting topics I ever learned about, but at first it was very confusing to me. Ever since then I have used ethics in every part of my life.

I had more responsibilities as every year went by. I started doing research for the attorneys, and

handling more complex paperwork. I learned a lot about the different types of law, and the different court systems, and the rules involved in each one. I learned what had to be filed when, and I developed a system for the attorneys so they would be reminded of things like filing deadlines and certain paperwork for each of their active cases. I sat in on some depositions, and I took over a lot of the smaller jobs that the attorneys had been doing before. I really enjoyed this job, and it gave me the self-confidence that I didn't have before I started working there.

Because I worked in the front office, I met a lot of people. One of the people I met was a man who worked part time for the Sheriff's department. He had a job in one of the manufacturing plants on the night shift, and worked part time as a deputy sheriff. We eventually began to date, and decided to get married. I got pregnant right away, and by the third month of pregnancy I had to give my notice at work because I was sick all the time. The doctor wanted me to take it easy, and thought I would have an easier time if I was not working. My husband was happy to have me at home, and made enough money so that I didn't have to work. Even with not working, it was a hard pregnancy and I was very sick for the entire nine months.

I missed working. It seemed so boring, staying home day after day, after I had been in the work force for so many years. I read and read, day after day, and kept expanding my reading themes. I started to keep a file of the titles and authors of the books I read. At the time I did it because I was bored, but now it has turned out to be useful.

At this time I became friendly with my next-door neighbor. I had never had much time to get to know her very well, because I was working and raising my son. We had talked now and then, but when I was home all the time, we got to be very friendly. She can only be described as a hippie. She

Patsy Starr Smith

was older than me, wore long flowing dresses and sandals, grew a lot of vegetables and herbs in her big garden behind her house, and smoked cigars. She had lived all over the world, and settled here because she liked Pennsylvania the best. Her parents had been rich, and she had a trust fund and inheritance from them which allowed her to not work if she didn't want to. She volunteered at the domestic abuse shelter and at the humane society, and often went to New York or Washington to be in marches.

From the time I was very young I loved to sing. My father told me that my mother was very musical, and had been a very good singer. I may have heard her sing when I was a baby, but I don't remember it. After she left us, she moved to Florida to be near her sister, and we never saw her again. She died when I was 17, and I really didn't feel very bad because I never knew her. My father said she named me Patsy after Patsy Cline, her favorite singer. I guess Patsy Cline's influence must have rubbed off on me, because I always loved country music. When I was in high school I pretended not to like it, and acted as if I liked the rock music that all my friends listened to, but when I was alone I always listened to a country station on the radio.

When I was home and bored, I noticed that there were some music books and tapes in the library. I started taking them out, and taught myself to read music. I did it by looking at the music of songs I already knew the melody for, and figured out what all the little notes meant. We had learned a little bit about reading music in school, so I had a little idea of what to do. It was easy for me to learn to read music, and then I had a lot more songs I could sing. I had an old acoustic guitar that my first husband gave me for my birthday one year, and I taught myself to play it. During this time I figured out how to read the music for guitar chords and taught myself a lot of new chords and techniques.

One day when the weather was warm and the windows were open, I was singing and playing my

guitar, and my neighbor knocked on the door. She was very excited and started asking me about the music I was singing. At first I didn't understand what she was talking about, until she explained that some songs have been around for hundreds of years, even though we think we are hearing them for the first time when some popular singer records them. This is how I learned about Francis Child and his collection of ballads. It turns out that I had been singing what was known as "Child 200," a song I have heard all my life. It was recorded in the sixties during the folk music craze as "The Whistling Gypsy." She had a big collection of old folk music, and a lot of books, including a book of all the ballads collected by Child. She also had some instruments which she never played any more. She had an autoharp and a mountain dulcimer. I learned how to play both of them, and added to my reading and learning.

This neighbor, Blanche, really encouraged me with my music. She began to talk about how I should perform out in public. At first I thought this was just impossible, but my husband thought it was a good idea too, and eventually I went to an event at the Congregational Church where they had several singers. Each of us performed three songs for a small audience. I got so much positive feedback that night, and I became friends with the other musicians. Ever since then I have performed in public, often at free events at schools and churches. Sometimes groups and clubs in the area have called me to perform at one of their meetings, and they pay a little stipend. I have sung at several weddings, and that is always both happy and sad for me. I get together with other musicians and we play and sing together, and swap ideas. Sometimes I am asked to join in with a bluegrass group and play at one of their gigs.

After my second son, Jason, was born I stayed home to take care of him. Duane loved Jason, and was a great helper. There was never any jealousy on Duane's part. My husband was not home very much

because of his two jobs. He would come in and go straight to sleep in the morning, then get up in the early afternoon and go to his other job. He never established much of a relationship with Jason, although he did say he loved him. Duane had a pretty good relationship with his father, and saw him often. This was a very easy time in my life. I had two sons who were both wonderful to be with, and a very low stress life. Jason and I went to all of Duane's school events. When my husband was home, we had a good time together, and he seemed very happy.

When Jason was about a year old, I started to feel like I needed to be out working, at least part time. If I wanted to work full time I could have gone back to the law office, but I thought that would be too much. I put Jason in the day care where Duane had gone, and where I had worked, and I got a job three mornings a week at a shop called "Pandora's Box" that sold a mixture of gift items and fancy women's clothing. The shop opened at 10:00 so I had plenty of time to get the boys off to school and day care, and get to work. I usually worked until 1:00, so I could get to school events, make doctor's appointments, and all the other things I needed to do. I had plenty of time for my family, and I still had a chance to get out and work and be with other people.

After I had been there a little while, I made a few suggestions to the owner about some ways to display the merchandise. She liked my ideas and tried them out. Over time we experimented with some very interesting merchandising techniques and got a lot of interest from the customers and other business owners in town. Of course I read some books about retail merchandising, and got even more ideas. Then we started offering special events to get customers to come into the shop. Sometimes I performed at these events. She put me in charge of the advertising for the special events, and I developed a lot of new ideas for advertising. I worked with local newspapers, the local radio stations, and made up a few unusual advertising gimmicks. One time I rented bunny costumes

for Duane and me, and we spent two days going all around town in our costumes, handing out candy and flyers about the shop's next event. We got some free publicity from that in the newspaper, which added to our regular advertising.

We developed themes, and promoted certain merchandise connected with the themes. We had a great time with all this, and the shop's business improved a lot. It improved so much that when the shop next door went out of business, we doubled the size of our shop. I went to some big wholesale gift shows with my boss, and learned about wholesale buying, anticipating trends, and wheeling and dealing with wholesalers.

When I started working there, it was a quiet, low-key shop, that appealed to mostly middle-aged ladies. My boss and I seemed to have a way of sparking new ideas in each other, and we just kept coming up with more things to do. We eventually had a much broader clientele. I convinced her to get a computer so we could keep track of the business better with spreadsheets. I had become convinced that computers were the best things for businesses after learning about them at the law office. We started learning about the Internet and discovered all the things we could find that way. We got more and more new ideas. This was one of the most fun jobs I ever had.

I had been at the shop for six years. Life seemed to be really good. I had a nice husband, a part time job I enjoyed a lot, two great kids who were both in school now, and I had just found out I was pregnant again. I saw my sister and brother often, because they lived nearby. My father and his family still lived on the old family farm and we saw them often too.

One Friday my father picked Jason up after school to take him to check out the things that would be

in the auction that weekend. My father had some of the old equipment from when the farm was operating, and he cut hay for the heifers he raised. He wanted to see about upgrading. Jason liked doing things with my father, and was excited to go with him. Jason was going to stay overnight and go to the auction the next morning. As they were driving out of town, they were hit head on by a drunk driver. My father was killed instantly, and Jason received a spinal cord injury which paralyzed him from the waist down.

I don't think I can describe how terrible those next several months were. Everything in my life changed. We missed my father so much. Jason was in the hospital for a long time, and then in a rehab center for months. Duane felt so awful about his grandfather's death and his brother's injuries that he started skipping school and getting in with a crowd that drank all the time. My husband was so devastated that he came home less and less.

Eventually we were able to bring Jason home. We had all sorts of equipment and all sorts of procedures to learn. My sister was a big help here, because she had been a nurse for so many years and knew how to talk to doctors, other nurses and physical therapists. Somehow during all this time, my daughter, Dawn, was born.

I stayed home with Jason and learned how to take care of him. Between Jason and Dawn, I was busy every single minute. I hardly had time to read any more, but I did find the time to read about Death and Dying, and everything I could get my hands on about taking care of someone with spinal cord injuries. It is a good thing I liked to read, because I had to fight with the school every step of the way to get the education Jason needed. Even though his spinal cord was injured and he would never be able to do the things the other kids could do, there was nothing wrong with his mind and he needed

to keep up with his school work. I also needed to get him involved with other children so he would not be isolated at home all the time.

I went from feeling like life was almost perfect to being so depressed and discouraged that I could hardly get from one day to the next. To make matters worse, my husband could not handle all the stress and we separated. He moved in with another woman, someone without any children, and still lives with her. We are divorced now, and he hardly ever calls the children. They see him once or twice during the summer.

Duane eventually managed to get out of his self-destructive behavior and graduate high school. He got a job and continued to live at home. I tried to get him to go to college but he said he was not interested in college. He was a big help with Jason, and took him out often to sports events, to McDonalds and other things that children like to do.

I stayed home and took care of everyone. I got a very good child support and alimony settlement from my husband, so I did not have to worry about money along with everything else. But everything else just kept me down. I hardly ever wanted to get together with my musician friends any more, and the only songs I ever sang were sad ones. I started to see a psychologist for this depression that I just couldn't seem to shake. Of course this got me interested in reading books about psychology and depression, which then got me interested in learning about more disorders than just depression. I got a computer and found that there was a lot on the Internet that I could read about depression and other problems.

I thought that if I was doing something productive, I might feel a little less depressed. Now that I had a computer, I could do some work for the attorneys I used to work for. They were happy to have

some extra help during the times when there was more work to do than their staff could handle. They gave my name to some colleagues, and before long I had a lot of work. This was a good way to keep active and be home with Dawn, and available for Jason when I was needed at school.

I started getting regular calls for doing work at home and I decided to get more organized. I remembered some of the things we had done at the gift shop as far as keeping track of the business, and I made up a spreadsheet system on my computer. It wasn't very hard to figure out, and once I made it up I had a lot easier time keeping track of everything.

I had exchanged Christmas cards with my mother's sister, Suzann, ever since my mother passed away, but we had never met. Suzann had moved to Vermont after my mother had died. Out of the blue she called me one day and said she was coming to Pennsylvania and would visit us. I did not know what to think about this. She was family, but I really didn't know her. My life was so overwhelming, with taking care of the kids and my small business that I didn't want to have a house guest that I would have to entertain.

Suzann came anyway, and this was another time when meeting someone turned out to be the best thing that could have happened to me. She turned out to be a really nice person, who enjoyed every one of us. She could talk to each of the children right at their level and seemed to know just what they would be interested in. She pitched right in to help with Jason's care, she talked sports with Duane, and she fixed Dawn's hair in a different style every morning. She had never been married and didn't have any children, and had made a success of herself in business.

Suzann was very blunt. This probably was one of the reasons she was so successful in business. She had started out working at a dry cleaner's and later had a chance to buy the business. One thing led to

another, and she eventually had a chain of dry cleaner shops, and then she branched out into laundromats and car washes. She joked that she would buy any business that cleaned up messes. Her bluntness shocked me at first, because she just said whatever she thought. But she was always kind, and never said hurtful things. One evening, after Duane had gone out with friends and Jason and Dawn were asleep, she just flat out asked me why I was wasting my life.

At first I was so mad I wanted to throw her out of my house. I started to explain all the ways I was not wasting my life, but then I just stopped and started to cry. After that we talked and talked about what I could do with my life. Two days later she was back on the airplane to her cleaning businesses. I realized that one of the things I had always wanted to do but never even admitted to myself was to go to college.

I talked to Suzann on the phone over the next few months, and I talked to some friends back home who I thought had good, sensible ideas. Once, Dawn, Jason and I visited Suzanne in Vermont for a week and in we fell in love with it; it was so lush and green and quiet there and it reminded me of my childhood on the farm. I decided that I would move up to Vermont to be near Suzann. It was a hard decision to leave the area where I had lived all my life, but I thought we all needed to start over. I came up to Vermont a few times to see about medical care for Jason, and to get some ideas about work and college. Duane was very angry at first, because he did not want to move away and thought I was abandoning him. Then he came up to Vermont with me and decided right away that he liked it, too. I was very happy when he decided to move up here with us. The children are very happy here, and Jason is getting care just as good as he got in Pennsylvania. Their father did not seem to care one way or the other. Once we all got settled in, I found some people who would hire me to do the same kind of part time work I was doing before. I still do some work for the law firm in Pennsylvania. I

love the way the internet can help you to do things you never could do before.

Now that I have started college, I love it. Duane has started at CCV too. I think I will get my associate's degree before he gets his, because of taking Assessment of Prior Learning and putting this portfolio together. Now I feel like I can accomplish something, and I have hopes for my future.

I still don't know what I want to have a career in. I have been thinking about becoming a psychologist because that field is so interesting, and because my psychologist helped me so much when I was depressed. I also think about how much I enjoyed working in the law office, and I have thought about becoming an attorney. I don't want to just settle for being a Paralegal. Women can do anything nowadays. When I worked at the gift shop I was full of ideas for better ways to sell products, so I am wondering if there is something I could do where I could come up with ideas all the time. I love to be with people, so whatever I choose will be working with people. I know I want to first get an associate degree in Liberal Studies, and then get a bachelor's degree, and I think I will take enough different classes so by then I will be able to decide what to do next.

So many people have helped me in my life to get to where I am now. I want to thank the committee for reading and evaluating my portfolio and helping me get to wherever I am going next.

Resume

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- 1981 – 1985 The Children’s Garden, Erie, PA
Preschool Teacher
Planned and put into practice daily educational programs to educate preschool-age children from ages one to eight. Created play areas and quiet areas. Assured health and well being of children in care.
- 1985 – 1986 Miller & Lehman Associates, Erie, PA
Receptionist
Greeted guests and clients, prepared office documents, handled phone lines, responded to inquiry requests, sorted incoming and outgoing correspondence, took dictation, typed documents, used computer skills, maintained and used all office equipment.
- 1986 – 1989 Miller & Lehman Associates, Erie, PA
Office Manager
Supervised office staff, planned for office needs, scheduled staff and attorneys, managed vendor relations, managed office finances, assured compliance with federal and state regulations for safety, maintained computers, trained staff in computer applications, and other duties as necessary to verse a busy law practice.
- 1989 – 1990 Miller & Lehman Associates, Erie, PA
Office Manager and Legal Researcher
Performed legal research and prepared legal documents for several attorneys and other legal staff.
- 1992 – 1998 Pandora’s Box, Erie, PA
Assistant Manager
Oversaw all store operations for a gift shop/ boutique, including inventory management, sales, retail management, computerized accounting functions, marketing, advertising, staff supervision, and community relations.

2002 – present Patsy’s Legal Research, Erie, PA
Independent Researcher
Perform legal research and preparation of legal documents for several attorneys as well as private clients, mainly by use of the Internet.

Patsy’s Legal Research relocated to Waterbury, VT from Erie, PA in the winter of 2004.

Hobbies and Other Interests:

American Folk Music

Literature

Guitar

Computer Technology

Gardening

References gladly supplied upon request.

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