SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR APPLYING FOR JUDICIAL CLERKSHIPS

Factors to consider when evaluating potential strengths and weaknesses in your application:
A. Law school experience
   1) Academic record – generally need to be in the top 10% for federal clerkships
   2) Journal experience or other significant legal writing/publications
   3) Externship with a judge
   4) Relevant Coursework:
      Federal Jurisdiction, Administrative Law, Federal Criminal Law, Conflicts
      For specialty courts: Tax Courses, Bankruptcy Law
   5) Clinic/Moot Court

B. Recommendations (2 or 3)
   1) Law Faculty
      i. Know through a small class or have taken multiple courses
      ii. Research Assistant or Tutor
      iii. Advisor on journal note
      iv. Discuss where you are applying with your recommenders to target contacts
   2) Legal Employers/Adjunct Faculty
      i. Avoid using more than one adjunct or legal employer as a recommender unless they know judges. Some judges do require a recommendation from a legal employer.
      ii. Speak about your writing/analytical skills
      iii. Speak positively about other attributes (intellectual, work habits, character)

C. Writing sample (substantive legal writing demonstrating legal analysis)
   1) Law School work
   2) Work for employer (seek employer permission and redact)

D. Nonacademic experience and interests (might show skills or interesting, well-rounded personality)
   1) Jobs (paid and volunteer)
   2) Proficiency in more than one language
   3) Any other interesting, distinguishing items including travel/hobbies can be included in an interests section on your resume

E. Apply Broadly
   1) Apply to judges outside of Chicago—a federal clerkship anywhere is marketable and will help you land a job in Chicago post-clerking
   2) Apply to magistrate judges
   3) Apply to staff attorney positions
   4) Apply to specialty courts

F. Network with Judges
   1) Join and Inn of Court or the CBA and attend events with judges
   2) Take courses taught by judges
   3) Attend Law School events where judges will be in attendance