

YOUR LETTER HEAD

February 2, 2017

PLEASE WRITE A CHARACTER LETTER

You are being asked to write a character or reference letter for our client, John Mathis. As you may know, John has plead guilty in federal court to bank robbery and is facing sentencing. He needs such letters from friends, relatives, co-workers and supervisors, former teachers, and others who know him in a variety of life situations. Character letters are of great importance in obtaining fair and just treatment for him. Below are a few pointers on character letters that you may want to keep in mind when writing your letter.

HOW TO BEGIN

The best character letters often begin by saying (1) who you are, (2) what you do, (3) how long you have known John, (4) under what circumstances you have come to know John (for instance: school, work, church or charitable activities), (5) what is your current relationship with John, and (6) how well you feel you know him.

WHAT TO WRITE ABOUT?

You should give an honest opinion as to John's character. Do you consider him honest? Law abiding? Generous? Does John show thoughtfulness and concern for others? Does he have ambitions in life? How has he made a contribution to his community or the world? Does he have a good reputation? Is he well-liked? If you know, what is the quality of his work habits?

In this section, it is important to give specific examples of why you attribute certain qualities to John. I have found that you can most effectively communicate the true character of a person if you not only state your opinion, but also explain why you hold that opinion. It is often helpful to include an example of some praiseworthy incident or act by John that you witnessed or heard about as an example of how he has behaved well in the past.

When you talk about John, you should not be afraid to admit that he plead guilty to this crime. In fact, if your opinion remains the same even in the face of his conviction, please state that. If John has expressed remorse and sorrow for his mistakes, state that as well. What you should not do, however, is comment on the facts of the case and why you may think he should have been found not guilty.

SENDING YOUR LETTER

While your letter should be addressed to the Honorable Judge Departure, United States District Judge, you should NOT send it directly to the judge. Please send it in care of [Insert Attorney

Name and Address Here] You may also fax a copy to ### or email a copy to ----- . Whether you hand write or type your letter, it should be easily readable. I also welcome and encourage you to submit photos that will show the judge important events in John's life, accomplishments of which he is proud, as well as the nature of John's relationships with family and friends.

Please send your completed letter to my attention as soon as possible. John's sentencing is scheduled for [Insert Sentencing Date] in Courtroom ##, United States District Court for the District of New Jersey, ----, New Jersey. If you are available, please come to court. It is very important to show the judge that John has the love and support of his family and friends.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

Thank you in advance for the time, thought, and effort you will no doubt put into your character letter. Writing this letter on John's behalf will be an important part of his case. Your letter is vital to educating the Judge as to the kind of person John Mathis really is. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call me at #####. I look forward to receiving your letter.

Sincerely,

Attorney, Esquire