

California attorney capitalizes on the ‘right opportunity at right time’

By Brian Cox

Attorney Ali Ferrando is well versed in precise timing.

As a teenager, she spent several summers performing as a member of the color guard of the Blue Devils, a drum and bugle corps based out of Concord, Calif. The hours were long, the drilling intense. The rigorous schedule required discipline and attention to time management. The coaches were strict and exacting. From early morning to late at night, her days were regimented and organized. The corps toured from late June to early August, with members sleeping on the gym floors and practicing on the fields of accommodating high schools. The tour culminated at the annual Drum Corps International World Championship at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.



Ferrando displays her snowboarding prowess at Lake Tahoe, one of the most famed ski and snowboard destinations in the world.



Ferrando loved all of it.

“It was a huge part of my life,” she says. “Every summer for three years, that was all I did.”

Many of the lessons and skill sets she learned through color guard, school marching band and in drum corps throughout her younger years proved of value later in law school and into her legal career.

A sense of good timing was one of them.

So, when she was offered a position in the transactional business practice at Brothers Smith LLP in 2022, she recognized it as the “right opportunity at the right time,” and she seized it.

It was, in fact, the opportunity she’d been searching for since beginning her legal career.

She had been working in railroad litigation at a Sacramento law firm for 18 months after graduating from law school and had recognized fairly quickly that litigation was not her calling.

“It was not my jam,” she says. “My experience in litigation always felt like we were missing the forest for the trees. Transactional business to me just feels so much more geared toward a goal and toward an actual resolution.”

Ferrando knew since law school that she wanted to practice transactional business. It fit her personality. But as a new lawyer fresh out of law school, she found few doors open to transactional opportunities.

Even at Brothers Smith, she knew the firm was made up of attorneys with significantly more experience and may have typically sought someone less junior. Ferrando says she is grateful that “they took a chance” on her.

“My practice now is what I always saw myself practicing in,” she says. “I feel very lucky to be in the role I’m in now.”

Ferrando was born and raised in Benicia, Calif., a town in the San Francisco Bay Area. Her mother was a flight attendant for Northwest Airlines (now Delta) and her father worked in the solar industry. After high school, Ferrando headed south for college, attending California State University, Long Beach to study political science.

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An avid hiker, Ferrando has tackled the Devil's Bridge Trail in Sedona, Arizona.

She was already striving to attend law school, but a dispute involving the apartment complex where she was living with roommates further convinced her to become a lawyer. She remembers how the leasing office became more attentive and accommodating once she mentioned that she'd spoken with an attorney.

The moment impressed on her the influence lawyers can wield.

"The system really does take advantage of people who don't have knowledge," she says, "and so to be the person who can help provide them with that knowledge and help guide them through things that aren't so clear to the layperson is definitely important to me."

When Ferrando enrolled at the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law, she did so with her best friend since college. They went to Cal State, Long Beach, together as well and both majored in political science and minored in communications.

"I was lucky enough that when I entered into law school, I wasn't there with a bunch of strangers having to make friends," says Ferrando with a laugh. "I already had a built-in friend to lean on."

After graduating in 2020 from McGeorge with a dual concentration in business and intellectual property law, Ferrando began preparing for the bar exam, which was postponed twice in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It was months riddled with anxiety, wondering if they were going to postpone it again," she recalls.

After finally taking the bar exam remotely and being locked indoors for months on end, Ferrando was ready to get away while waiting for her results. Just days after taking the exam, she left on a trip to Zion National Park in Utah with her mom and her brother to hike the Narrows, a gorge in Zion Canyon with walls a thousand feet tall.

At Brothers Smith, Ferrando feels fortunate to have Roger Brothers as a mentor.

"I owe so much of my success to Roger," she says. "He's been a great mentor. He makes himself incredibly available to me. His door is always open."

Ferrando's practice focuses on corporate, real estate, and transactional business. She provides legal counsel to individuals and business entities throughout all stages of business.

It is work she has wanted to do for years and is thrilled to be doing now.

"I assist businesses and individuals who are operating businesses from formation through winding up and everything in between," she says. "I always think it's fun to help a business start from scratch and help them build from there and watch them succeed."



After taking the California bar exam during the COVID-19 pandemic, attorney Ali Ferrando took a trip to Utah to hike the Narrows in Zion National Park with her brother, Ken.