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# LADY JUSTICE

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PRIMERUS WOMEN  
LAWYERS SECTION

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# WOMEN LAWYERS SECTION COMMITTEE



**Melissa L. Demorest LeDuc**  
*Chair*  
Demorest Law Firm, PLLC  
Detroit, Michigan  
Phone: +1 248.723.5500  
melissa@demolaw.com  
[www.demolaw.com](http://www.demolaw.com)



**Karina B. Sterman**  
*Immediate Past Chair*  
Greenberg Glusker  
Los Angeles, California  
Phone: +1 310.553.3610  
ksterman@greenbergglusker.com  
[www.greenbergglusker.com](http://www.greenbergglusker.com)



**Melody M. Block**  
*Committee Member*  
Mandelbaum Barrett PC  
Roseland, New Jersey  
Phone: +1 973.736.4600  
mblock@mblawfirm.com  
[www.mblawfirm.com](http://www.mblawfirm.com)



**Jessica Klotz**  
*Committee Member*  
Lewis Johs Avallone Aviles, LLP  
New York, New York  
Phone: +1 212.233.7195  
jklotz@lewisjohs.com  
[www.lewisjohs.com](http://www.lewisjohs.com)



**Carrie A. Ward**  
*Committee Member*  
Earp Cohn P.C.  
Cherry Hill, New Jersey  
Phone: +1 856.354.7700  
cward@earpcohn.com  
[www.earpcohn.com](http://www.earpcohn.com)

# WOMEN LAWYERS SECTION UPDATES

**WLS Networking Call**  
Books and Beverages – November 12, 2024 at 1:30 PM EST

**Primerus Contact for the WLS**  
Denise Shafer – dshafer@primerus.com

# CHAIR COLUMN



Melissa L. Demorest LeDuc focuses her practice on commercial real estate and business transactions at Demorest Law Firm, PLLC. Her commercial real estate practice includes sales and acquisitions of multifamily housing, hotels, shopping centers, and other commercial properties, as well as leasing. She also handles business mergers and acquisitions, contracts, and other business transactions. She serves as outside general counsel for many small businesses, providing guidance in employment, real estate, contracts, business formation, and other business matters.

Welcome to our fall issue of Lady Justice. As we turn the corner into fall, I am constantly reminded of how it takes a village to practice law and to be a working parent. When school starts, it's time to enlist help both at work and on the home front so that deadlines are met and everyone gets where they need to go. At work, building your village depends on your practice area, but it could look like finding a mentor, building a network of trusted experts

and referral partners, building your internal team and culture, delegating to meet client needs, or leaning on your Primerus network. No one can do it alone.

In this issue, Primerus lawyers give us a glimpse into their villages and how they have gotten to where they are today. Our goal as the WLS is to support women lawyers, both in Primerus and in their firms and careers. Let us help you build your village.

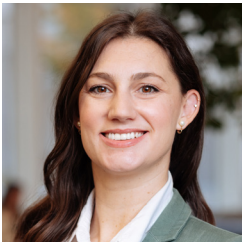
We would love for you to join us for our next networking call on November 12 at 1:30 PM EST. We will be bringing back our popular “Books and Beverages” call again this year, so be prepared to discuss a favorite book while enjoying a beverage of your choice. **P**







# MEET THE MEMBER



Lauren Sommer Boskofsky is a partner at Landye Bennett Blumstein LLP in Anchorage, Alaska. For over a decade she has worked with Alaska Native Corporations, private entities, tribes, municipalities, and individuals in all regions of Alaska, helping them manage their real estate transactions and related issues, and navigate the acquisition and disposition of businesses. Lauren is a runner, a soccer enthusiast, and loves to travel with her husband and three young boys, whether in Alaska, the Lower 48, or abroad.

## WHAT YEAR DID YOU START PRACTICING LAW?

I began practicing in 2013 following a clerkship.

## WHERE DO YOU PRACTICE LAW?

Anchorage, Alaska.

## WHAT IS THE FOCUS OF YOUR PRACTICE?

Commercial real estate, and what I call “Alaska M&A”, which is to say, the buying and selling of businesses in Alaska. That means mostly small, closely held businesses, often with unique-to-Alaska features. Lately, I have had a lot of deals in the tourism industry – think fishing charter businesses, remote lodges, and the like. Also, I am privileged to work with many Alaska Native Corporations on acquisitions and dispositions, which by default include features unique to these organizations as a result of their creation pursuant to the federal Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act

## WHY DID YOU BECOME A LAWYER AND HAS THE LAW MET YOUR EXPECTATIONS?

I became a lawyer because very shortly after graduating from university, I concluded that my sociology-anthropology degree was not going to provide me the predictability and stability I wanted for myself. I was working in the local public library at the time and shelved an LSAT prep book. I like puzzles, so started working the LSAT puzzles on my work breaks. I was pretty good at them, so, for lack of a better idea, I sat for the LSAT. I did well enough to earn a first-year scholarship from an institution in a state I’d never lived, so I took it and set off for the Pacific Northwest. I wish I had a better answer, but there it is.

I moved to Alaska the day after graduating law school. I am originally from the Midwest, so I had few – if any well-formed expectations at the time. My life is drastically different now than it was when I moved up here over twelve years ago, so it is difficult to say if my career has met those initial vague expectations. However, I am professionally fulfilled; I really enjoy working with my clients, and the intellectual challenges I get to grapple with each day. I cannot imagine practicing at another firm or anywhere other than in Alaska.

## WHAT IS ONE PIECE OF ADVICE YOU WISH SOMEONE WOULD HAVE GIVEN YOU PRIOR TO STARTING THE PRACTICE OF LAW?

Find a firm where you like the people and go there. Be patient and do not settle for anything less. I got lucky on this score, but many of my contemporaries did not, and in a lot of cases our job and even overall life satisfaction diverged as a result.

## WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE RECEIVED SINCE STARTING PRACTICE?

We are in the service industry. The high-end service industry, but the industry nonetheless. It seems so self-evident now, but it was not at the time.

## WHAT IS ONE OF YOUR FAVORITE BOOKS?

I am the daughter of a librarian and two lifelong, avid readers, so my love of books started when I was young. It is difficult for me to pick a favorite book. I just finished The Covenant of Water by Abraham Verghese, and can’t wait to read more of his work. **P**



# BUILDING BRIDGES: VETERAN VALUES AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT IN MY LEGAL CAREER



Lani E. Medina is a distinguished corporate transactional attorney and Air Force veteran, currently serving as a Senior Associate at Barton LLP. Her practice encompasses mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures, and minority investments, where she provides tailored legal advice to clients ranging from startups to Fortune 500 companies. A proud Puerto Rican and Bronx native, Lani's career reflects her transition from the disciplined environment of the Air Force to top-tier law firms and an in-house role at PetVet Care Centers. Her passion for technology, particularly in artificial intelligence and its applications in legal practice, complements her commitment to promoting kindness and excellence within the legal profession.

I have been in the process of “building bridges” for my entire life.

When I look back, the bridges that have spanned the stages of my life and career are evident, with each venture having given me the tools to move on and succeed in the next. I can trace how the support from my hometown Bronx community, my background as an Air Force veteran, and my professional collaborations have been instrumental in shaping my career in corporate law and M&A. These experiences have influenced my commitment to integrity and excellence in every aspect of my work.

The bridges that I have been able to build with others – whether with community members, fellow veterans, legal colleagues, or business clients – have largely shaped the arc of my professional story. While accolades are wonderful, I've found that these types of successful interpersonal

relationships are the true hallmark of the kind of lawyer I want to be.

It started with my Bronx upbringing, which prepared me for my legal career long before I even contemplated becoming a lawyer. The Bronx's diverse demographic makeup means the New York borough benefits from many rich cultural traditions and has a strong sense of community and identity. Part of that identity includes the values of hard work, dedication, and service to others, which were instilled in me by both my family and the community at large.

These values have ended up being foundational in my professional success, and they drive my commitment to serving my clients and community. I value the chance to give back and invest in others, whether through my pro bono legal work or volunteer work, which currently includes mentoring youth in the Latinx community.

After high school, I enlisted in the United States Air Force where I served for four years as an Information Manager with the 22nd Maintenance Squadron and I was awarded Information Manager of the Year.

My time in the military certainly ingrained the typical traits you would imagine, such as discipline, leadership, and teamwork. But my role as an information manager also taught me to lead and manage complex matters with both precision and honesty – a skill set that I use every day as a deal lawyer. Whether I'm helping create a new corporate entity, facilitating a merger/acquisition, handling a structured finance transaction, or drafting a complex contract, attention to detail and ethical execution are paramount.

I take a lot of pride in my meticulous attention to detail and the conscientiousness I developed during my years of military service. These

qualities help ensure that my work is legally sound and reflects the highest standards of professional excellence.

My time in the Air Force also taught me some unanticipated lessons when I was stationed in Wichita, Kansas. Moving to a much smaller, predominantly white mid-western city was a big cultural change from The Bronx, but this imbued me with a sense of cultural adaptability. I learned how to work effectively with people from all kinds of backgrounds, which has since proven to be an invaluable skill in building strong client and colleague relationships during my legal career.

After the Air Force, I attended Columbia University where I received my bachelor's degree and then went on to attend Fordham University School of Law for my JD. I have since worked as both in-house counsel and as a member of global law firms. I landed at Barton LLP in early 2023, where I primarily concentrate on business transactions such as mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures, and minority investments.


In the same way that my neighborhood and military communities have acted as support systems to help launch my career, I have found that international partnerships and professional networks are equally important in achieving successful business outcomes for me today. Through Barton's membership in Primerus, I've been granted the opportunity to build bridges with attorneys from all over the globe. As one example, while I'm based in New York, I've been able to engage in strategic collaborations with attorneys at Broedermann Jahn, a Primerus firm based in Hamburg, Germany.

Our relationship reflects the cultural adaptability I've developed and demonstrates both firms' shared commitment to ethical and innovative legal practice. Together, we apply strategic thinking and ethical considerations to cross-border matters while working in tandem to navigate complex international issues with precision. In one notable instance, we collaborated on a matter involving a client with multifaceted

legal needs, combining our firms' expertise to provide comprehensive support. This partnership allowed us to address intricate contractual issues and help ensure that the client's interests were seamlessly and effectively protected across multiple jurisdictions.

Being strategic with the resources available to me has allowed me to provide value beyond traditional legal advice, helping me to meet the broader business goals of my clients. Leveraging different connections, perspectives, expertise, and resources gives me an edge and makes me a more effective lawyer. These connections can also help spark and sustain innovation. A current area that I'm committed to continue exploring and providing thought leadership on is the intersection of generative artificial intelligence and M&A – an exciting combination that could have massive benefits for clients in the long run. I'm looking forward to collaborating with other thought leaders in this space.

While my path to becoming a “deal” lawyer has not been the typical one, I wouldn't have it any other way. Each leg of my journey has provided me with life lessons and support that can't be gleaned from a textbook. The culmination of these experiences has given me a unique perspective and has led to my ability to navigate complex corporate deals and legal issues with efficiency, accuracy, and even creativity.

I hope to keep building bridges as my professional journey continues, and I can't wait to see where it leads. 





# BALANCING THE SCALES: EMPOWERING AND ADVANCING WOMEN IN LAW FIRMS



Jenn Coalson is litigation counsel with Krevolin Horst, LLC in Atlanta, Georgia, where she focuses on business litigation, shareholder disputes, employment law, and the representation of lawyers and law firms. Jenn is a graduate of Wake Forest University and the University of Georgia School of Law and a former law clerk to the Honorable Timothy C. Batten, Sr., Chief Judge of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia.

Without question, women lawyers have made great strides in recent decades. Of the approximately 1.3 million lawyers in America, women make up 39 percent of the profession, up from 29 percent in the year 2000 and just 20 percent in 1991. In law schools, the trend continues, as women outnumber men among law school graduates, with the gap widening each year.<sup>1</sup>

But this increasing presence within the profession has not led to increasing job satisfaction, pay parity, or leadership roles for women within law firms. Women lawyers account for 47 percent of law firm associates, 32 percent of non-equity partners, 22 percent of equity partners, and 12

percent of managing partners. While female associates and non-equity partners are paid, on average, very slightly less than their male peers, the pay disparity jumps at the equity partner level, where women partners are paid 78 percent of what male partners are paid.<sup>2</sup> Compared to men, women in law firms on average experience less job satisfaction, feel they receive less recognition for their work, and encounter more negative work experiences, such as being mistaken for lower level employees, experiencing demeaning comments or jokes, and being perceived as less committed to their careers.<sup>3</sup>

In order for women lawyers to wield an influence within the legal

profession that corresponds to their presence within it, law firms must take steps to address the unique challenges women face in advancing their careers. These include:

## 1. IMPLEMENTING DYNAMIC MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS

Law firms should develop and implement mentorship programs that are both formal and adaptable; rewarding mentors who actively engage with women at every stage of their career. It is not enough to pair a lawyer with a mentor and call the job done; these programs must evolve with a firm's changing dynamics, practices, and personalities. A robust mentorship program should

extend beyond the firm, encouraging mentees to participate in professional organizations where they can build diverse networks and foster relationships with other practitioners who will naturally evolve into mentors.

## 2. INTEGRATING MENTORSHIP INTO CAREER DECISION-MAKING

Mentors should have a meaningful role to play in decisions about their mentees' careers, so that the mentor has the opportunity to advocate for their protégé's needs and advancement within the firm. This doesn't require every mentor to be a senior partner. Firms can structure mentoring programs that allow mentors to influence decisions related to pay, promotions, case assignments, and professional development, ensuring that mentees receive the support they need to progress in their careers.

## 3. EVALUATING AND MODERNIZING FIRM PRACTICES

Firms should critically assess their historical and existing practices to identify and eliminate practices that may be unintentionally perpetuating implicit biases or creating systemic barriers that disproportionately affect women. With the post-COVID advent of affordable remote work technologies, adopting flexible work arrangements and parental leave policies is a practical and impactful way to address the unique challenges women face in balancing personal and professional responsibilities.

## 4. ENHANCING OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN'S NETWORKING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Firms should actively support networking and professional development opportunities tailored specifically for women, providing

them with the tools to strengthen and leverage their professional networks. These initiatives should include leadership training and executive education programs, equipping women lawyers with the skills necessary to navigate career advancement and encouraging them to share resources and opportunities within these networks.

## 5. PROMOTING WOMEN'S SUCCESSES EXTERNALLY

Firms should publicly recognize and celebrate the roles women play in firm successes. This affirms women's importance to the firm's overall success and strengthens their professional reputation, signaling to clients and peers alike that they are valued leaders and contributors. By promoting women externally, on platforms like LinkedIn and in client announcements and other press releases published on firm websites, firms also provide younger lawyers with visible role models who demonstrate the paths to success within the firm, helping to build confidence and encourage lawyers to

take on challenging cases and roles.

Advancing women within a firm is the collective responsibility of everybody at the firm, regardless of gender. In most instances, however, women must take an active role in advocating for each other and helping each other succeed by proactively creating opportunities and fostering a supportive environment where they and their colleagues can thrive. By championing one another, women can build a stronger and more inclusive culture that benefits everybody.

The under-representation of women within firm leadership and the ongoing disparities in pay and job satisfaction are manifestations of deep-rooted problems within the legal industry. These problems must be addressed through sustained and systemic efforts, rather than any single quick fix. The actions outlined here and similar actions are steps law firms can take today to drive meaningful change and produce outsized gains in women's representation in firm leadership and across the industry as a whole. **P**



<sup>1</sup> The figures in this paragraph are from the "Demographics" and "Women in the Profession" portions of the American Bar Association's "Profile of the Legal Profession" (2023), available at [www.abalegalprofile.com/index.html](http://www.abalegalprofile.com/index.html).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* ("Women in the Profession"). The National Association of Women Lawyers reports that pay parity among male and female equity partners reached a 15-year low in 2020 compared with studies from 2005, 2010, and 2016. 2022 NAWL Report, "Behind the Numbers," at p.6, <https://www.nawl.org/research>.

<sup>3</sup> Roberta D. Liebenberg and Stephanie A. Scharf, "Walking Out the Door: The Facts, Figures, and Future of Experienced Women Lawyers in Private Practice," [www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/women/walkoutdoor\\_online\\_042320.pdf](http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/women/walkoutdoor_online_042320.pdf).



# FOUR REASONS WHY IT TRULY TAKES A VILLAGE TO BECOME AN EFFECTIVE LAWYER



Mary Harriet Moore was born and raised in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, and eventually returned to practice law in the Charleston area. She is an associate attorney practicing in the areas of business and commercial litigation, personal injury, probate, estate, and trust litigation, employment and labor law, human trafficking, and business and corporate law.

Prior to joining Rosen Hagood, Mary Harriet worked as a law clerk for the firm during the summer of 2020. She was also a law clerk for the National Advocacy Center in Columbia, South Carolina. She graduated cum laude from the University of South Carolina School of Law and was named to the Order of the Wig and Robe. Mary Harriet received her bachelor's degree in economics and her bachelor's degree in hispanic studies from Davidson College. While at Davidson, she was also captain of the volleyball team and spent a semester abroad in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

I have always been a fan of the age-old adage, "If you want to go somewhere fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together." It rings true in both my personal and professional lives and has become a guiding principle. While individual efforts can yield rapid progress, sustained and meaningful success often requires collaboration and collective effort.

I have been lucky enough to have been surrounded by multiple "villages" which have helped develop me into the person and lawyer I am today. I grew up in a large family – both my parents have eight brothers and sisters and I have over 40 cousins. Most of us live in Charleston, South Carolina, so our family always relied on each other, whether it be to organize holiday gatherings, carpooling to school, or anything else someone needed.

I was also always actively involved in team sports including basketball and volleyball. As teammates, we relied on each other both on and off the courts and pushed each other to be the best versions of ourselves.

Whether it was my large family or my volleyball and basketball teams, I quickly realized that it takes a village – supportive mentors, dedicated coaches, and encouraging family members – playing pivotal roles in shaping and advancing my personal development.

The same is true for professional development as a young lawyer. As I transitioned into my professional legal career, I wanted to mirror the communities and experiences I had both with my family and in sports. While the specific roles and individuals differ, the principle

remains the same: a supportive network is essential for progress and success.

As I embarked on my legal career, I kept this in mind as I looked for potential firms. I wanted to work with a firm and group of people that valued collaboration and camaraderie. After my second year of law school, I was lucky enough to clerk with Rosen Hagood. I immediately felt that the firm valued building strong mentorships and relationships and working collaboratively on cases. I recently reached three years working at Rosen Hagood and during those three years, I have experienced a collaborative environment that has helped me develop tremendously as a lawyer and a person.

I know that my experience isn't unique. It's incredibly important for

anyone beginning their legal career to find an environment that helps them learn and grow into the best lawyer they can be. Not only has finding the right support and mentorship helped me develop my lawyering skills, it's also helped me better serve my clients. This is one of the reasons why I've decided to become a mentor for a second-year law student this year. After seeing the impact that my "village" had on me and my development in only three years, I am more motivated than ever to help someone whose shoes I was in just a few years ago.

There are so many benefits to working in a collaborative environment like the one I've been so lucky to find, but here are a few that I have found to be most helpful when it comes to developing as a young lawyer and learning to advocate effectively for clients.

## FOUR BENEFITS TO DEVELOPING YOUR COMMUNITY AS A YOUNG LAWYER

### 1. DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

The practice of law is inherently collaborative. You have to work with your clients, other attorneys and staff in your firm, and the other side to get the best outcome for your client. Collaboration brings together individuals with varied

skills, experiences, and viewpoints. As a young lawyer, it allows you to learn from others' experiences of what strategies, techniques, or legal theories you can use to get the best result for your client.

### 2. SHARED RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Working as a team allows for the pooling of resources, whether it's knowledge or experience. This collective approach can provide access to tools and expertise that might be beyond the reach of an individual. Additionally, as a young lawyer, the support and encouragement from colleagues can enhance your confidence to take on new experiences that you have not done before such as taking a particular deposition, arguing a complicated motion, or examining a witness for the first time.


### 3. LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS AND NETWORKING

Collaboration fosters the development of professional relationships and networks. Building a strong network can lead to new opportunities, mentorship, and career advancement. Relationships established through teamwork often result in lasting professional connections that can be valuable throughout one's career, especially as a young lawyer who is learning and dealing with new issues every day that a mentor or colleague may have already experienced. Having

a mentor or colleagues to run ideas, strategies, or questions by has been critically beneficial to my development as a lawyer and my ability to problem solve on behalf of my clients.

### 4. LEARNING AND GROWTH

Working with others offers opportunities for continuous learning and personal growth. By engaging with diverse team members, one can acquire new skills, gain insights into different perspectives, and develop a deeper understanding of their field. Young lawyers can also experience different writing styles, negotiation styles, and advocacy styles to find what best suits them. I have learned that each lawyer approaches discovery, motions, depositions, and trials differently. By experiencing these different approaches, I have been able to build my skillset and tailor my approaches to a style that works best for me.

Whether in your personal or professional life, the journey to success is deeply influenced by a support network. Family members, friends, mentors, and professional connections all contribute to your development and achievements. By recognizing and valuing the roles of these supportive figures, I have been able to have greater confidence and resilience as I navigate the legal profession. It truly does take a village to achieve greatness, and I am lucky to have a great one. 



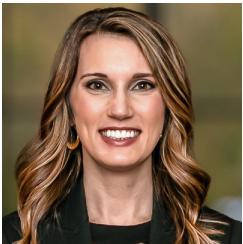


# LEGAL COLLABORATIONS: AN EMERGING AREA OF LAW SCHOOL LIFE



Mackenzie Bretz is an associate in the family law team at Beresford Booth Lawyers. She works with individual clients and families to navigate challenging times around divorce and custody issues. A graduate of Seattle University School of Law, Mackenzie was a member of the Women’s Law Caucus and the Washington Women’s Lawyers Organization. During law school, Mackenzie completed both an externship at the University of Washington, working on data privacy issues, and an internship working with the Moderate Means program, serving families unable to obtain legal help elsewhere. These experiences strengthened Mackenzie’s ability to work fiercely but with compassion. Mackenzie understands that a client’s story can be the most important part of their case, and the ability to listen and comprehend the client’s needs helps Mackenzie excel in her advocacy.

Amanda Gamble is an associate with Beresford Booth Lawyers in the divorce & family law team. Amanda earned her juris doctor degree from Oklahoma City School of Law and continued her legal training to earn her LLM from Vermont School of Law. She is an exceptional family law litigator and a strong advocate for her clients. She has devoted her entire practice to family law matters. Amanda understands her clients are facing some of the most challenging times in their lives when they seek her help and guidance. She takes her role as an advocate very seriously and offers compassion, dedication, and sound judgement. She has experience with complex divorce litigation, parentage actions, parenting plans, child support modifications, and more. Amanda is an active participant in her local community, volunteering her time with two legal clinics and serving on the Washington Women Lawyers state board.



The expansion of legal education collaborations is reshaping the law school landscape, offering students innovative approaches to teaching, research, and community service. These collaborations range from partnerships between law schools and other academic institutions to alliances with corporations and non-profits. While there are many benefits, some require more oversight than they are receiving. Despite some challenges, legal education collaborations are a driving force for advancements in educational

settings and access to justice for communities. It is imperative that legal professionals and law schools continue to seek these types of collaborations and enhance their potential for our future generation of lawyers. Law schools also are increasingly recognizing the value of collaborating with other academic institutions. This goes beyond simply offering dual educational programs such as pursuing an LLM alongside a juris doctor. Meaningful collaborations occur by placing


students in internships at other academic institutions, organizing interdisciplinary seminars and workshops to explore legal issues from several perspectives, or allowing faculty from law schools to be guest teachers at other institutions. These partnerships create more dynamic learning environments and provide opportunities for growth for students and the legal profession overall. Collaborations that offer substantial value are partnerships between law schools, legal professionals, and their surrounding communities.

Access to justice is a serious issue across the United States. These sorts of collaborations often include legal clinics, pro bono programs, community outreach initiatives to raise awareness about specific legal issues, or research partnerships focused on studying legal challenges confronting a particular community. By harnessing the strengths of law schools and legal professionals and jointly accessing extensive resources, law students can gain valuable real-world experience while communities gain increased access to justice. This is an area where legal professionals should seek to engage. There is tremendous value in connecting with local communities and offering legal services that might otherwise be overlooked. These types of collaborations have significant opportunities for law students and practitioners to diversify their knowledge and encounter clients they may not otherwise meet.

A type of collaboration known to many students and one with the most participation is externships. An externship is frequently thought to bring great value to law students and law firms. However, contrary to that popular opinion, some scholars are rightfully questioning the effectiveness of these programs. Deborah Maranville, author of “Passion, Context, And Lawyering Skills: Choosing Among Simulated And Real Clinical Experiences,” suggests that if externships occur early, with training and ample supervision, they could be more effective in enhancing a student’s skills. Maranville explains that many students still enjoy their externships or paid work experiences despite inadequate supervision.

1 Article: *Passion, Context, And Lawyering Skills: Choosing Among Simulated And Real Clinical Experiences*, 7 *Clinical L. Rev.* 123, 144.  
2 RCW 2.70.120 and RCW 43.101.505.

She believes this is because these experiences place students in real-world settings and allow them to do meaningful work, which can enhance their passion for the legal profession and expose them to new issues. Maranville believes that, done right, collaborative learning processes could be a better alternative to traditional learning methods, despite their lack of supervision. She argues that as they currently are, externships give students a limited understanding of the law and little practical engagement in legal practice, often resulting in minimal improvement. Maranville also states that feedback is commonly lacking and that the support provided is inadequate, making the educational aspect ineffective. To address these issues, she suggests that externships should take place early in a person’s law school career, be linked to substantive courses, involve classroom components, and offer better supervision. This could be accomplished by teaching relevant skills before an externship, training supervisors, or improving students’ ability to learn from supervisors.<sup>1</sup> While not all collaborations are perfect, working towards bettering the opportunities available will create more effective attorneys in the future. In the State of Washington, an influential new collaboration is the Law Student Rural Public Prosecution Program and the Law Student Rural Public Defense Program, which began on June 6, 2024. This type of program does not correct the serious attorney shortage in our rural communities, but it is a valiant effort in the right direction. Program facilitators work with law schools to place law

students and recent graduates as legal interns with prosecuting and public defense attorneys in underserved and rural areas of Washington state. The internships provide real-world experience under the mentorship of experienced attorneys to encourage interns to seek employment opportunities in these areas.<sup>2</sup> While the program is still brand new and the impact has to be seen, it is encouraging that states are taking steps to use collaborations of this sort to combat the crisis facing our communities post pandemic. Legal collaborations offer law students and their surrounding communities many benefits. By working together, organizations can share resources, develop innovative solutions to complex legal issues, and increase influence within the legal community and industry. Law schools should continue to incorporate collaborative learning exercises into their curricula to continue fostering legal collaborations with appropriate oversight. Additionally, seeking legal professionals to be guest speakers or offer mentorship programs is essential. Legal professionals should actively seek partnerships to provide networking and mentorship opportunities. These actions are how our next generation of lawyers will continue to improve and better the legal profession. 





# ECONOMIES AND ECOSYSTEMS: THE AIM TO BENEFIT AND PROTECT BOTH



Meaghan M. Anderson, from Gordon Arata, is an energy attorney with over 10 years of experience in transactional law, including roles as Gulf of Mexico Land Representative at Chevron and General Counsel at Cantium. She has extensive expertise in negotiating and managing complex agreements, including leases and joint operating agreements. Additionally, Meaghan is a Louisiana Public Notary and owner of Waterdogged Sportfishing, LLC, a luxury offshore fishing company. In her free time, she enjoys fishing, cooking, and volunteering.

Being both a sportfishing charter owner and an attorney in the energy industry creates an interesting juxtaposition, especially in a place like Louisiana, where the economy and environment are so closely intertwined. At first glance, these roles might seem at odds – one focused on preserving and enjoying natural resources, and the other on facilitating energy production, which can affect those same resources. However, they can also be seen as two sides of the same coin.

In Louisiana, the health of the environment is directly tied to the success of both industries. The fishing industry relies on clean, thriving ecosystems, while the energy industry, particularly with the rise of renewables, is increasingly invested in sustainable practices to protect these environments. As someone who straddles both worlds, I am in a rare position to understand the balance that must be struck between economic development and environmental preservation.

The federal Reinvesting in Shoreline Economies and Ecosystems (RISEE)

Act reflects a balanced approach to energy development by ensuring that states like Louisiana benefit economically from offshore energy production while also addressing environmental concerns. The sharing of revenues helps mitigate the environmental effects of energy extraction by funding restoration efforts, thus aligning economic growth with environmental stewardship. This model is significant for several reasons.

The RISEE Act establishes a revenue-sharing model where coastal states receive a share of the revenues from offshore wind energy production. This is similar to the revenue-sharing model already in place for oil and gas production. For Louisiana, this means that the state can gain financial benefits from the development of offshore wind farms, helping to fund critical projects related to coastal restoration, infrastructure, and resilience against natural disasters.

The funds generated through the RISEE Act can be reinvested in coastal restoration projects, which are vital for Louisiana due to its vulnerability

to coastal erosion, sea level rise, and hurricanes. The additional revenue stream allows the state to invest in the preservation and rebuilding of its coastlines, protecting communities, ecosystems, and economic activities dependent on healthy coastal environments.

By creating a revenue-sharing model that includes offshore wind energy, the RISEE Act incentivizes the development of renewable energy projects in Louisiana. This not only supports the state's transition to cleaner energy sources but also stimulates economic growth through new investments in the renewable energy sector. The Act encourages the growth of the wind energy industry in the Gulf of Mexico, positioning Louisiana as a key player in the burgeoning offshore wind market.

The revenue generated through this model can also be used to support local communities and infrastructure projects. This includes enhancing flood protection, improving public services, and supporting industries affected by environmental changes. The RISEE Act ensures

that the benefits of offshore energy development extend beyond just the energy companies and include direct benefits for the people and communities in coastal states.

Yet, the RISEE Act could face several legal challenges. These challenges could arise from various stakeholders, including states, industry players, environmental groups, and others concerned with federal and state powers, the allocation of revenues, and environmental protections.

One such legal challenge could be constitutional challenges of federal versus state authority, including Tenth Amendment issues. Some might argue that the RISEE Act infringes on a state's rights under the Tenth Amendment, particularly if a state believes that the federal government is overstepping its bounds by dictating how offshore revenues should be allocated or used. Another legal challenge could be whether the federal government has the authority under the Commerce Clause to regulate and distribute revenues from energy resources located on the Outer Continental Shelf. This could lead to disputes over the extent of federal control versus state rights over resources in these areas.

The RISEE Act could also potentially invoke environmental impact

concerns under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which requires federal agencies to assess the environmental impacts of their proposed actions. Legal challenges could arise if opponents argue that the RISEE Act's implementation leads to offshore wind or other energy projects without adequate environmental assessments, potentially violating NEPA. From the environmental standpoint as well, if revenue-sharing encourages the development of projects in areas that are habitats for endangered species, environmental groups might sue under the Endangered Species Act, arguing that the RISEE Act indirectly promotes activities harmful to protected species without sufficient safeguards.

Although the RISEE Act aims to foster economic and environmental benefits through revenue sharing, it may face a variety of legal challenges related to federal and state authority, environmental protection, administrative law, and industry rights. These challenges could lead to litigation that might delay or complicate the Act's implementation. Yet, with the support of energy and conservation organizations, the RISEE Act could create a revenue sharing model for a sustainable and equitable framework that allows Louisiana

and other coastal states to benefit from offshore wind energy while simultaneously addressing critical environmental and infrastructure needs. This legislation not only supports Louisiana's economic and energy diversification goals but also strengthens its capacity to protect and restore its valuable coastal ecosystems.

My dual roles give me a firsthand perspective on the importance of responsible energy practices and the need for policies that support both industries. In many ways, my experience in both fields allows me to advocate for solutions that benefit both the environment and the economy. The vitality of Louisiana's natural resources, like its fisheries, is essential not only for the local economy but also for maintaining the state's cultural heritage and way of life. This perspective is valuable in today's world, where there is a growing recognition that environmental sustainability and economic growth do not have to be mutually exclusive. By navigating the complexities of these two industries, we can contribute to the broader conversation about how Louisiana can continue to thrive while protecting its unique and precious ecosystems. **P**





# REACHING UP: OPPORTUNITY TAKES MORE THAN BOOTSTRAPS



Terisa Shoremount is an associate at McCollom D'Emilio Smith Uebler LLC and licensed to practice in Pennsylvania and Delaware. Terisa's practice is primarily in litigation, trying corporate and commercial cases along with will and trust contests, in Delaware's courts. Terisa is married with two kids and in her free time tries to garden, but usually the weeds win, and cares for her family's menagerie of animals.

Everyone has heard the old adage, if you want to move up in life, reach down and pull yourself up by your bootstraps. I came from humble beginnings. I had boots (with holes), and I thought my only way up was through my own resourcefulness, by using my bootstraps. But pulling those bootstraps only lands you back on your feet, in the same position as where you started. It takes more to move up.

By some accounts, the phrase “to pull yourself up by your bootstraps,” or at least the idea, is first attributed to Rudolf Erich Raspe. Raspe penned tales about Baron Munchausen, a man who flew by riding upon an eagle, whizzed through the air atop a cannon ball, and once was swallowed by a large, slippery fish.<sup>1</sup> Raspe even wrote about Baron rescuing himself from the grip of a swamp by accomplishing a seemingly impossible task: pulling himself out by his own pigtail. Baron's self-rescue is said to be the first iteration of someone pulling themselves up by their bootstraps.

Sometime after Baron's feat was published, the actual phrase “pulling yourself up by your bootstraps” emerged to mean accomplishing an impossible task, on your own. Today, “pulling yourself up by your bootstraps” is the process by which society says that those with modest beginnings obtain the American dream – upward mobility – solely through their own hard work. The downfall of this view is that we may look past the contributions of those hands that reached out and helped pull us up.

While I was more stuck in a barn instead of a swamp, and while I did have boots and even a pigtail long enough to pull, I learned that reaching up got me further than trying to pull myself up alone. Today, I briefly write about a few people that reached their hands out and helped pull me up so that I could become a lawyer.

Another American dream is to purchase a home. My husband and I were lucky to purchase our first home, and except when its heat pump died on the first night we lived there,

that house was without issue. Not so for our second try. Our second, and current house purchase was a modest ranch house on a little over 11 acres. It had a pool, and more importantly, a barn. The day after telling our kids that we got them a pony, my husband discovered something curious in the basement. There, quietly nestled under the cover of a drop ceiling, in between two joists, was some sort of mud. It was termites. And that was just the beginning. We made a choice to litigate the undisclosed issues and our attorney, Phillip Berger, first set me on course to be a lawyer.

As we all know, litigation is not easy. Deciding who to sue, reading your situation in ink, and being deposed is not for the weak. Phil was kind, answered my questions, and allowed me to be involved in our claims more than probably necessary. During all this, I was working for multiple people caring for their horses. Phil told me that when I was done with the horses, that I should go to law school. Separately, after I was deposed, Phil told my husband, that if I was barred,

he would have hired me on the spot. That was all the push I needed. I signed up for the LSAT. A few months after the house litigation was resolved, I got a call from Phil offering me a job as his office manager. For Phil, this may have been a leap of faith considering what my current profession was, but he took a chance on me. I worked for Phil (along with one evening barn job and a Sunday morning job) until I started law school. Without Phil reaching out, I would not be a lawyer.

Applying for law school was another issue, mainly the dreaded admissions essay. When completing my applications, it had been at least 10 years since I put pen to paper

and wrote. Those days, I spent more time with a pitchfork in my hand than a pen. In the evenings, after my first two jobs, I took care of horses who summered up north with their owner, Rebecca Lord. Before starting to work for Rebecca, I did a quick internet search and found that she was Ivy League-educated in literature. This information sprung back in my memory when I had to put down the pitchfork, pick up my pen, and write my admissions essay. Rebecca was back in her winter location, but she agreed to give me some feedback. Instead of sending me a red line, we talked. On the phone, Rebecca let me in on a secret – that great writing is a collaborative process. She

explained that many great writers had collaborators, except perhaps Hemmingway, and proceeded to waive her magic wand over my essay so that it sparkled. Rebecca's magic included having me show, and not tell, the audience what I was trying to convey. Still a valuable lesson that I carry with me. I was accepted into a law school, with a scholarship, because of Rebecca's help.

Another essential step after admission to law school is finding post-law school employment. I only knew one established lawyer in Delaware, Kevin Fasic. I met Kevin because I taught one of his children in my husband's high school marching band. In my third year of law school, after having no success applying for post-graduation jobs, I emailed Kevin. Kevin took his time, which I now know must have been scant, and created a list of reputable Delaware law firms along with the people who he knew at those firms. Kevin took this one step further and reached out to his contacts for each application that I sent out. While ultimately I ended up where I am now based on my own search, Kevin's help pulled me back out of the swamp where I thought I had no chance – at 30-something years old – of securing post law school employment.

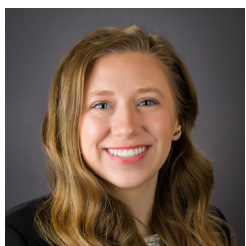
Why am I writing about law school, something that we all completed, to a bunch of lawyers? Simple. If you find yourself in a swamp like Baron, or just trying to complete what you think is an impossible task, you can always reach down to your own bootstraps and pull. You may end up back on your feet, but you could reach up to those willing to help and get yourself further than standing where you were. **P**



<sup>1</sup> Anchi Hoh, The Tall Tales of Baron Munchausen, Library of Congress Blogs, Aug. 22, 2017, [blogs.loc.gov/international-collections/2017/08/the-tall-tales-of-baron-munchausen/](https://blogs.loc.gov/international-collections/2017/08/the-tall-tales-of-baron-munchausen/) (last visited Sept. 2, 2024).



# FROM THE LAUNCH ROOM TO THE COURTROOM: IT TAKES A VILLAGE



Victoria L. Rohloff is an associate attorney with Cornelius & Collins, LLP in Nashville, Tennessee. Victoria focuses her practice in general civil litigation and labor and employment law. Prior to joining Cornelius & Collins, Victoria graduated summa cum laude from Texas Tech University School of Law where she served as the editor-in-chief of the Journal of Biosecurity, Biosafety, and Biodefense Law and as a student director of the Pro Bono board. She received her bachelor's degree from the University of Central Florida. In her free time, Victoria enjoys running, baking, and scuba diving.

Ever since I was a child, I dreamt of growing up, living my dreams, and achieving all my goals. What those dreams didn't include, were the challenges that lay ahead in achieving those goals. In a world that often celebrates the achievements of individuals, the truth remains that most success stories are built on a foundation of collaboration and community support. My own career journey is a testament to this truth, illustrating how a network of mentors, supporters, and supervisors can profoundly impact one's professional path. Reflecting on my own experiences, it's clear that launching a successful career is rarely a solitary endeavor – it truly takes a village.

## THE MENTOR WHO LIT THE SPARK

When I first embarked on my career journey, I lacked direction. Like most 16-year-olds, I had absolutely no idea what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I grew up in the space industry, and always figured that would be my destiny. So, at 16, I participated in a shadow program at the Kennedy Space Center, to hopefully figure out the ultimate answer to the age-old

question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" That week is when I met my first mentor, Kevin Berry. Kevin was the first person to see the potential in me and take me under his wing. He provided me with invaluable guidance and practical advice on navigating a professional landscape.

Kevin actively advocated for me by bringing me back for full internships within his engineering group. He introduced me to key contacts and opened doors that would have otherwise remained closed. Kevin pushed me to be the best I could be, demand respect, and to dream big. His belief in my abilities and his guidance were instrumental in helping me build a solid foundation. Although I did not become an engineer, the confidence and skills I gained from his mentorship were critical in setting me on a path towards success as an attorney.

## THE SUPPORTIVE NETWORK THAT PROVIDED ENCOURAGEMENT

Law school is often described as crucible – a place where raw ambition

and intellect are tested under intense pressure. The journey through law school is marked by significant struggles and challenges, yet it is also an experience rich with rewards and profound insight. Embarking on the journey that is law school at the age of 20 presented a unique set of challenges and experiences. I was fortunate to have a supportive network of friends and family who consistently provided encouragement. Three women in particular, Katie Moorehead, Shawn Adams, and Olivia Elliott, helped me feel at home at Texas Tech University School of Law. Their belief in me was especially crucial during moments of self-doubt and uncertainty. They celebrated my successes and offered a listening ear during challenging times. This emotional support created a strong foundation that allowed me to persevere and stay motivated. These three women constantly reminded me the fundamental importance of a work-life balance, not to allow the opinions of others to define me, and to use the resources available to me to achieve my goals.

Moreover, my family's unwavering support provided the stability I needed to focus on my goals. Their sacrifices and encouragement were integral in enabling me to take risks and pursue opportunities that might have otherwise seemed too daunting. The encouragement and love from those closest to me have been a driving force in my professional journey.

## THE CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM THAT DROVE IMPROVEMENT

Not all support comes in the form of praise; some of the most impactful feedback I received was constructive criticism. During my second year of law school, I worked as a law clerk for Chris Johnson, an attorney in

my hometown, who played a pivotal role in my professional development. Chris fostered my interest in civil litigation by allowing me to see different phases of the litigation process and showed me what it truly means to be an attorney. He also provided his candid feedback of my work and was instrumental in helping refine my skills and improve my performance.

Chris's approach was aimed at growth, and his critiques pushed me to address weaknesses and build on my strengths. The lessons I learned from his feedback were pivotal in my professional development, reinforcing the importance of embracing constructive criticism as a tool for improvement. He taught me two very important lessons: that everyone makes mistakes, and that almost everything is fixable if caught early enough. As a young attorney, it is always scary when you make a mistake, but it is inevitable. While it can feel like it is the end of the world,

Chris taught me the importance of recognizing your mistakes and learning from them to grow into a better person.

## THE COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS WHO FOSTERED GROWTH

While Kevin and Chris provided me with direction, it is the partners at Cornelius & Collins who have helped me grow and adapt to the legal industry in Nashville. Stepping into a professional role in a new city meant leaving behind the familiar structure of academic life and navigating the complexities of a real-world work environment.


While traditional notions often cast partners as authoritative figures, my experience at Cornelius & Collins has demonstrated the profound impact collaborative partners can have on personal and professional growth. Their approach to leadership has fostered a supportive and dynamic work environment. From the outset, they embraced a collaborative leadership style that emphasized open communication, mutual respect, and shared



decision-making. This collaborative style encouraged me to voice my ideas and opinions and has allowed me to develop a deeper understanding of the various types of law we practice.

The partners and staff at Cornelius & Collins create a sense of community and belonging and have also significantly contributed to my personal development. Their roles go beyond the traditional “boss” roll and includes mentorship and career guidance. They have taken an active interest in my career aspirations and provided valuable advice on navigating my career path. The experience of taking on responsibilities, managing challenges, and achieving my goals has fostered a sense of confidence and self-efficacy.

My career journey has been profoundly shaped by the collective support and collaboration of various individuals and groups. From the mentorship that provided direction to the collaborative projects that fostered growth, to the support network that offered encouragement and constructive criticism, each element has played a crucial role in my professional development.

The saying “it takes a village” is not just a platitude but a reflection of how interconnected and interdependent our paths to success truly are. My experience underscores the importance of nurturing relationships, seeking support, and embracing collaboration. As I continue to advance in my career, I remain deeply grateful for the “village” that has supported me and remains committed to giving back by offering the same encouragement and guidance to others on their journey. 







**International Society of Primerus Law Firms**

452 Ada Drive SE, Suite 300  
Ada, Michigan 49301

Toll-Free Phone: +1 800.968.2211  
Fax: +1 616.458.7099

Email: [dshafer@primerus.com](mailto:dshafer@primerus.com)  
[www.primerus.com](http://www.primerus.com)

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