

A special publication  
presented by

MICHIGAN  
**Lawyers Weekly**



# UP & COMING LAWYERS 2021

# MICHIGAN Lawyers Weekly

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## To our readers:

We are honored to present Michigan Lawyers Weekly’s Up & Coming Lawyers Class of 2021.

This program is dedicated to saluting Michigan lawyers who have established a name for themselves in their first 10 years in practice. This exceptional group is just getting started. Remember their names and join us as we follow their ascent in the profession.

In this special section of Michigan Lawyers Weekly, we profile each honoree through his or her answers to our questionnaire.

We hope you enjoy learning about their histories, challenges, goals and interesting facts as much as we did.

Please join us in congratulating the 25 members of this year’s outstanding class.

**Charlene A. Boccaccio, Associate Publisher**  
**Michigan Lawyers Weekly**



# Dominic F. Andriacchi Jr.

Partner, Dominic F. Andriacchi PC, Ishpeming  
Western Michigan University Thomas M. Cooley Law School

During his short tenure as a personal injury attorney, Andriacchi has won multiple jury trials — including a \$1.2 million verdict in a traumatic brain injury case — and argued before the Michigan Supreme Court. He is an executive board member of the Michigan Association for Justice and the Criminal Defense Attorneys of Michigan, as well as an adjunct professor at Northern Michigan University in the Political Science department.

Growing up:

I was born and raised in Ishpeming, a small, rural mining town in the Upper Peninsula. Ishpeming is known for producing hardworking people who love spending time outdoors. Thankfully, I’ve picked up these two characteristics.

Non-family mentor’s impact:

An important mentor is Gerry Spence. Meeting Gerry and spending time with him at “the Ranch” in Wyoming has had an incalculable impact on me personally and professionally. Not only did he help me become a better lawyer, he helped me become a better person. He also helped me understand the direction I wanted to take in law.

First job:

I was my father’s legal assistant in high school. With this experience, I knew exactly what I was getting into before I went to law school. I learned what being a lawyer is truly like. I had no illusions about a romanticized, TV version of law. That helped prevent any sort of disillusionment.

Biggest career challenge:

Deciding just what, exactly, I wanted to do in law. There are so many different and interesting aspects of the law that it is hard to pick just one or two to focus on.

Blue-sky goal:

To be lead counsel in 100 jury trials.

If I knew then:

Spend less time playing video games and read more business books.

Best tip for balance:

Never read emails after 12:00 p.m. on Friday. It’s too late in the day to do anything meaningful about whatever comes in, and the only thing that happens is your weekend is ruined.

I might have been:

I would have taught physical and



health education.

Guilty pleasure:

I really enjoy buying books — but not reading them. There are just too many books and so little time!

Favorite getaway:

Germany.

A month off:

I would take a trip with my wife to Germany to relax and sightsee. We

would probably also go to Athens, Greece, during that time.

You didn’t know:

I named my German Shepherd, Seneca, after a Roman philosopher (Lucius Annaeus Seneca), and I have two huskies, Eliza (named after Eliza Hamilton) and Fonzie (named after Arthur Fonzarelli). I can eat an obscene amount of Reese’s Peanut Butter Cups in one sitting.

Jaffe

JAFFE RAITT HEUER & WEISS

Congratulations to our partner

# Emily Mayer

Michigan Lawyers Weekly  
Up & Coming Lawyer

Passionate.

Innovative.

Determined.



# Kevin D. Battle Jr.

Associate, Miller Johnson, Grand Rapids  
Notre Dame Law School

Counseling clients on employment policies and practices, immigration matters and litigation strategy, Battle also helps foreign nationals and their families to enter the United States and ensure they maintain the appropriate status. As a member of Miller Johnson’s Diversity and Inclusion Committee, he has represented the firm in the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity Pathfinders program. Battle is actively involved with the Kent School Services Network and sits on the board of Justice for Our Neighbors.

**Growing up:**

I grew up in Muskegon, which is really a blue collar, gritty city. Growing up in Muskegon impacted me in two ways. First, seeing how hard people worked helped me develop a work ethic. Second, seeing the pride that community members rallied behind different causes and the city helped me realize that I need to take pride in everything that I do.

**Non-family mentor’s impact:**

Star Swift, my professor at Grand Valley State University, really had a

tremendous impact on my career. She was an attorney and prepared me to start thinking and acting like an attorney even before going to law school. She helped me navigate the law school admission process and has continued to be a tremendous asset to me.

**First job:**

I was a lifeguard at Michigan’s Adventure. It taught me a lot about customer service and working with people from different backgrounds. I am still friends with several people I worked with at that job.

**Humbling experience:**

My practice focuses on employment and family-based immigration matters. I have had cases where an immigration decision has taken an unexpected turn and either delayed or changed a business or a family’s plan. This has taught me to treat every case with the utmost importance. What may not seem important or nerve wracking for one person could be the most important thing for someone else.

**If I knew then:**

Place more emphasis on fostering long-term relationships and memories. A lot of the business of law is about



fostering long-term meaningful relationships.

**I might have been:**

I probably would have become an optometrist.

**Guilty pleasure:**

In the fall, I sit and watch football all day on Saturday and Sunday.

**Favorite getaway:**

This is probably a tie between the Cinque Terre and Barcelona.

**A month off:**

I would travel the world with my wife. We love traveling to different parts of the world and seeing different cultures and history.

**You didn’t know:**

I travel to a Detroit Lions away game almost every year with my friends from elementary/middle school. Win, lose or draw, I love the Lions. I love to travel, and it is my goal to see all seven continents.



After several years in private practice, Bilowus moved to Michigan State University College of Law as the assistant director of career development, interacting and helping students on a daily basis. Extremely active in professional associations — including serving as director at large of the Women Lawyers Association of Michigan, treasurer of the Michigan Hellenic Bar Association of Michigan and chair-elect of the State Bar of Michigan’s Young Lawyer section — she is president-elect of the Women’s

Bar Association, mentors law school and college students and serves on the board of directors for Empty Bowls Detroit.

**Growing up:**

I grew up in Virginia and Novi. I learned that no matter the location or environment one can build a sense of community. The “place” itself was far less important than the people I surrounded myself with.

**Non-family mentor’s impact:**

# Kristina A. Bilowus

Assistant Director of Career Development, Michigan State  
University College of Law, East Lansing  
Western Michigan University Thomas M. Cooley Law School

Fonda Gnacke and Kevin West were two impactful mentors who positively, and profoundly, shaped my career.

**First job:**

I was a DJ of sorts at the Fairfax Ice Arena where my sister trained as a competitive, singles skater. I learned that not all jobs are conventional, the customer is always right, and that every professional gig (no matter how big or small) takes work.

**Humbling experience:**

I was a presiding judge for a middle school mock trial competition two years after being licensed. I walked into the courtroom and one of the participating students asked me what middle school I was attending.

**Biggest career challenge:**

Letting go of the “would have/could have/should have” moments. Second-guessing is sometimes an Achilles’ heel for me that I consistently strive to overcome.

**Blue-sky goal:**

Positively impacting the students I work with and creating opportunities that better the lives of others. At the end of it all, I want to be a lawyer who serves.

**If I knew then:**

Don’t focus on what others are doing. Rather, focus on the person and professional you want to be, what skills you want to hone, and what sets you apart as a unique individual.

**Best tip for balance:**

Surround yourself with good people.

**I might have been:**

I would 100% be a teacher.

**Guilty pleasure:**

Binge-watching TV shows. Streaming services indulge me where I can play one episode after the next!

**Favorite getaway:**

My consistent getaway location is northern Michigan where my parents and my partner’s parents live.

**A month off:**

I would become Martha Stewart-ish and organize my house from top to bottom, travel to several different locations, and read a lot more for fun.

**You didn’t know:**

I was homeschooled until I was 16, and then went to community college. I did musical theater in college, including performing with the Comic Opera Guild of Ann Arbor.



# Stephanie M. Brochert

Associate, Plunkett Cooney PC, Bloomfield Hills  
Columbus School of Law, The Catholic University of America

Brochert represents major property and casualty insurance companies in coverage cases through the country, handling a variety of issues such as environmental contamination, construction defect and high-exposure product liability claims. She is a member of the Women’s Bar Association, Women Lawyers Association of Michigan, the American Bar Association and DRI – The Voice of the Defense Bar.

Growing up:

I grew up on Long Island. I benefited from easy access to world-class cultural and educational experiences. However, what likely had the biggest impact on me were the 9/11 terrorist attacks, which occurred when I was in high school. I had long been interested in history, but I found I had an even more ardent desire to learn about the factors that caused the attacks. This developed into a broader interest in geopolitics, government and the law that led me to law school and continues to this day.

Non-family mentor’s impact:

A former supervisor from a law school internship is still an important mentor to me. While tending to your lawyering skills is important, she has

shown me that it is equally as important to cultivate and tend to relationships, to have creative endeavors, and to sometimes just take some time to have fun.

First job:

I was a file clerk at a local Chevrolet dealer. Little did I know when I took that job that my life would eventually lead me to the Motor City!

Humbling experience:

Participating in my law school’s clinic program as a student attorney gave me perspective with respect to the world around me.

Biggest career challenge:

When my husband and I moved to Michigan, I prepared myself to learn the specific nuances in local law, but still felt like I was starting over at square one.

Blue-sky goal:

Discover a way to provide knowledge to people and help them feel that empowerment when they are interacting with the legal system, even if they cannot afford an attorney.

If I knew then:

Do not doubt the advice to take a year or so off between college and law school and gain some practical work



experience.

Best tip for balance:

Carving out time to take breaks to do something enjoyable is essential.

I might have been:

I would have been a writer of mystery novels.

Guilty pleasure:

Pizza. I would have it once a week or more if I could.

Favorite getaway:

Charleston, South Carolina.

A month off:

I would like to rent an RV for an extended road trip with my husband and my dog traveling to parts of the U.S. and Canada I’ve never seen before.

You didn’t know:

I spent a semester in college interning for a member of the UK Parliament. I made homemade candles as a hobby for a while and it actually became a profitable side business for a couple of years.

We congratulate Alex Hamo on his 2021 Up and Coming Lawyers honor by Michigan Lawyers Weekly.

Your positivity, drive, empathy, and commitment to your clients is so appreciated. We are proud of our colleague and friend.

Congratulations Alex!

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# Kathryn L. Burkhart

Partner, Garan Lucow Miller PC, Ann Arbor  
Western Michigan University Thomas M. Cooley Law School

In addition to her busy insurance defense practice — from no-fault insurance litigation, to premises liability and more — Burkhart mentors associates and law clerks at her firm and is active in local bar associations and defense trial advocacy groups. She donates her time and energy to Therapeutic Riding, Inc., which provide a therapeutic environment through horseback riding and other activities for people of all ages with disabilities or other challenges, and volunteers at local animal shelters.

Growing up:

I grew up in the small town of Whitmore Lake. Living in a place where everyone looked out for their neighbors reinforced the value of community and relationships.

Non-family mentor's impact:

I had several mentors in law school. My research and writing professor instilled the importance of using plain language to produce a clearer, stronger and more persuasive argument in a document.

First job:

I was a clerk at Kroger, and bagged groceries, sorted bottles/cans and stocked shelves. I learned that working hard and taking pride in your work provides tremendous satisfaction.

Humbling experience:

Being an attorney is to practice law, which requires constant self-improvement. You have to be willing to put in the time and effort to continually learn and improve to be an effective litigator for your client. I find myself thinking about cases while at home, driving around or if I wake up in the middle of the night. I am always contemplating the best way to reach a desired result.

If I knew then:

I think the best advice I've received is, "If you want it, you have to work for it." That still holds true.

Best tip for balance:

Understanding there is no "perfect" work-life balance, I strive for a realistic one. Some days, I may be more focused on work, where others are spent pursuing time with my family and my hobbies.



I might have been:

A veterinarian.

Guilty pleasure:

After a long day at the office, there is nothing more relaxing than being out on the lake during the summer months.

Favorite getaway:

My husband and I love to travel. With

COVID, we have been trying to visit every Michigan state park.

A month off:

Travel, of course!

You didn't know:

I am an avid runner. I love spending my free time volunteering at Therapeutic Riding Inc. in Ann Arbor.

# Susan L. Chalgian

Associate, Chalgian & Tripp Law Offices PLLC, East Lansing  
Western Michigan University Thomas M. Cooley Law School



Chalgian is an accredited Veteran Affairs attorney and elder law attorney who handles a high-volume practice that includes planning for long-term care needs for aging clients and special needs planning for persons with disabilities. She is the incoming vice president of the Women Lawyers Association of Michigan, and sits on the governing council of the State Bar's Elder Law and Disability Rights Section.

She is on the board for the Greater Lansing Estate Planning Council, and is an active member of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys.

Growing up:

I grew up in East Lansing. I thought I would live in a "big city" as an adult so I choose DePaul University for my undergraduate degree. While I loved Chicago, those four years showed me

that East Lansing was the right fit for me to settle down.

Non-family mentor's impact:

My dad is a lawyer and his legal mentors have been my mentors throughout my lifetime. John Bos and David Shaltz have inspired me to think creatively, work tirelessly for others, and have fun. This has brought me so much joy in practice and in my personal life.

First job:

I worked as a server at a local ice cream shop from ages 14-20. I believe working in customer service will shape your perspective for life. It reinforced my upbringing to be kind to everyone, and it gave me more patience.

Humbling experience:

It hasn't been one experience but it is there with every client meeting. I feel very privileged to be trusted with people's life stories, to hear about what is important to them and to be equipped to help them when they are having a difficult time. In my practice area, the most fulfilling experience can be when I help someone feel more independent despite their disability, illness or age.

Biggest career challenge:

Having a family and still accomplishing all I want to do as an attorney is the most difficult career challenge I have faced yet.

Blue-sky goal:

I was recently admitted to the bar of the U.S. Supreme Court. I did this for the experience, but I certainly would love to argue a case there one day.

If I knew then:

I wish I had been less intimidated by tax. It turned out to be interesting, not so scary, and is important to understand in almost every practice area.

I might have been:

Most likely a professor of history.

Guilty pleasure:

Ice cream!

Favorite getaway:

Michigan; usually headed north or just in my own backyard.

A month off:

I have always enjoyed home improvement projects. We recently purchased our forever home with substantial projects waiting; a month off would go by quickly for me there!



# Ann-Marie E. Earls

Partner, Melamed Levitt Milanowski & Earls PC, Huntington Woods  
Michigan State University College of Law

The youngest — and first female — partner in her firm’s history, Earls represents individuals and businesses who have suffered insured residential and commercial property losses during the investigation of the insurance claim and in litigation when coverage has been denied. She is an approved general civil mediator in Michigan, serves as a council member for the Insurance & Indemnity Law Section of the State Bar, and volunteers with the Detroit Chapter of the American Red Cross.

**Growing up:**

I grew up in Lansing. I worked as a student assistant for a variety of state government agencies, including the Elections Bureau and the Attorney General’s Office. Working for the state of Michigan fostered my interest in the law and ultimately led me to apply to law school. Growing up in Lansing also made me a die-hard MSU fan. Go Green!

**Non-family mentor’s impact:**

While there have been many people who have impacted my career to date, the two individuals who stand out the most are my partners: Rick Levitt and Joe Milanowski. They instilled in me

the importance of never giving up, always believing in myself and letting go of the things I cannot control.

**First job:**

My brother and I started our own “landscaping business” when I was in the sixth grade, and we had about a dozen customers. The experience taught me the values of working hard, punctuality and honoring commitments. It also taught me how to mow a lawn like a pro.

**Humbling experience:**

Showing up to my first scheduling conference with the expectation of only getting dates. I quickly learned the importance of knowing your case inside and out before any court hearing.

**Blue-sky goal:**

I hope to be an inspiring female force in an otherwise male-dominated industry and a leader in my field.

**If I knew then:**

Get as much real-life law practice and courtroom experience as possible. Also, avoid sitting in the back row of the lecture hall. It guarantees you will be one of the first people to get called on.

**Best tip for balance:**

Acknowledge and accept that you



cannot do everything all the time. Manage your time wisely, set reasonable daily goals and take regular breaks to physically and mentally recharge.

**I might have been:**

Aviator. Since I was a small child, it has been a dream to get my pilot’s license.

**Guilty pleasure:**

Gummy bears.

**Favorite getaway:**

My family lake house in Crystal that

I often refer to as my “happy place.” The lake house has been in my family for more than 50 years and will always hold a special place in my heart.

**A month off:**

Relax, travel and visit with family and friends.

**You didn’t know:**

I am an adrenaline junkie and am working towards obtaining my solo skydiving license. I am also a certified scuba diver.

# Ford Turrell

Partner

Warner congratulates you on your well-deserved recognition as a *Michigan Lawyers Weekly* **2021 Up & Coming Lawyer.**

Ford Turrell is an exceptional real estate and corporate law attorney at Warner Norcross + Judd. Visit **wnj.com** to learn more about his practice.





## Erin C. Flynn

**Associate, Nichols Sacks Slank Sendelbach  
Buiteweg & Solomon PC, Ann Arbor  
Western Michigan University Thomas M. Cooley Law School**

Flynn guides her family law clients through some of the biggest changes in their lives. The 2019 recipient of the State Bar’s Outstanding Young Lawyer Award was also selected to be part of Oakland County Executive’s Elite 40 under 40 Class that same year. Flynn is the immediate past president of the Women’s Bar Association—Oakland Region of the Women Lawyers Association of Michigan, and serves as a director at large for the Women Lawyers Association of Michigan.

**Growing up:**

I grew up in Canada, so I’d like to think I have those stereotypical Canadian attributes. It made me open-minded and accepting.

**Non-family mentor’s impact:**

Ashley Lowe gave a presentation at my law school orientation and I was convinced then and there that I wanted to practice family law. She made time for me every time I needed guidance and inspiration from that day on, and helped put my career on the trajectory it’s on.

**First job:**

I worked on the assembly line at

General Motors building transmissions the summer between graduating high school and starting university. I learned the amount of hands, work, effort, time and engineering that goes into something like building an everyday object that a lot of us would otherwise take for granted.

**Humbling experience:**

A former colleague and I won a lengthy custody/change of domicile trial. I was surprised at how emotional I was about it when I considered the “losing parent’s” perspective and how her life would change. The change was for the better of the family as a whole, but it had a profound emotional impact on me. It put the practice of family law in better perspective for me in terms of what “winning” in family law means.

**Biggest career challenge:**

I practice family law, so client management/management of expectations can prove very challenging. It’s a skill I continuously try to hone.

**Blue-sky goal:**

Write a book.

**If I knew then:**

Don’t try so hard at secured transactions — your efforts will prove futile. Honestly though, I would tell myself to



take advantage of the same opportunities, but with more confidence and to ask more questions.

**Best tip for balance:**

I try to accomplish at least one positive thing in each category each day — something I believe makes me a good mother and wife, something that makes me a good attorney, and something positive just for me, like squeezing in a workout.

**I might have been:**

An educator.

**Guilty pleasure:**

The “Real Housewives” franchise on Bravo.

**Favorite getaway:**

Siesta Key, Florida.

**You didn’t know:**

I honestly think a lot of people don’t know that I had a baby in December because it all happened during COVID and it’s an odd thing to announce over Zoom. I’ve read all the Harry Potter books at least twice.



Freelove-Sewell has a passion to help people involved in personal injury claims, particularly her clientele — the average individual often facing their first experience with a lawsuit. A mentor for students in the Black Law Student Association at the Michigan State University College of Law, she also serves as an alumna judge for 1L oral arguments and volunteers for the admissions office. Freelove-Sewell is a former teacher, has mentored Teach for America Detroit Teachers and continues to mentor metro Detroit-area students.

**Growing up:**

Growing up in the very diverse medium-sized town of New Haven, Connecticut, exposed me to people of all different backgrounds, beliefs, opinions and ways of life. It taught me to listen, ask questions, respect and appreciate differences and recognize commonalities in people. More than anything, it helped shape my purpose in life to ensure equity and justice for the underserved and underrepresented.

**Non-family mentor’s impact:**

Mariama Richards was a mentor for

## Janieasha J. Freelove-Sewell

**Litigation Attorney, The Mike Morse Law Firm, Southfield  
Michigan State University College of Law**

me throughout middle school, high school and college. She took me on trips to visit colleges around the U.S., and helped me apply and pay for my first college admissions test. Although I was kid, she took me seriously, encouraged me and supported my dream of becoming a lawyer. For every joyous occasion in my career, I think of Mariama and not only the significant role she played in my life but that which she continues to play in my heart and mind to help make me the attorney that I am.

**First job:**

Babysitting taught me maturity, responsibility, reliability, organization, planning skills and thinking on my feet in order to take care of, keep alive and entertain young children.

**Humbling experience:**

Representing clients who do not speak English. Those experiences showed me just how important good systems, laws, representation and listening are for our country, and have made me work even harder to be the best advocate for my clients that I can be.

**Biggest challenge:**

Knowing that I am doing all I possibly can for my clients as their lawyer, but feeling like it is not enough when I see they need so many more resources

from the community, like access to healthy food, a good education, transportation and warm clothes.

**Blue-sky goal:**

Become a judge.

**If I knew then:**

Take as many classes that I can, so I can be exposed to all different areas of law.

**Best tip for balance:**

Take time away from work to be with God and my thoughts. This helps keep me focused and grateful.

**I might have been:**

I would have studied psychology and sociology.

**Guilty pleasure:**

I am a food connoisseur. I enjoy trying new foods.

**Favorite getaway:**

My favorite vacation location is Brazil. Everything is beautiful, from the culture to the land.

**You didn’t know:**

I have travelled to more than 30 countries. In addition to speaking Spanish, I know some Portuguese, Latin, French, Chinese, Japanese and sign language.



# Alex M. Hamo

Partner, Hamo Law Firm, Flint  
Western Michigan University Thomas M. Cooley Law School

Alex M. Hamo represents clients who are seriously injured or who have died due to someone’s negligence, and has negotiated and resolved multiple seven-figure and six-figure cases. A member of the American Bar Association, Genesee County Bar Association, Flint Trial Lawyers, American Inns of Court and Michigan Association for Justice, he is active in local youth sports and learning centers.

Growing up:

I grew up in Flint. The city has gone through extremely hard times — which have been well documented over the years — including the latest issues we’ve had and are still having with the water crisis. Given the hard times Flint has gone through, it produces tough people. We consider ourselves to be the underdog and are not afraid to take on any challenge, as growing up in Flint can be challenge in itself. That’s how I approach every case as a personal injury plaintiff attorney. I consider myself a fighter for the underdog; I’m not afraid to take on any challenge, no matter the size, and to always give back to community that made me the person I am today.

Non-family mentor’s impact:

I could write a book on Judge

Duncan Beagle of the 7th Judicial Circuit Court and his impact on me and the Flint community. To keep it short, “Judge” taught me to listen before reacting, keep a professional demeanor at all times, have charisma and build good relationships. In law, I always work hard to follow what Judge has taught me and to have good relationships with opposing counsel. Things work out much better for all parties involved in a case when there is civility.

First job:

I worked in the treasury department for Flint City Hall. This is where I learned customer service.

Humbling experience:

Losing my first motion. I learned that I have to know the facts better than opposing counsel and, in some respects, know the law as much as or more than the presiding judge. You have to have confidence in your ability and in the facts of your case — and preparation is key to having confidence.

Biggest career challenge:

COVID-19. Without having any civil trials on the docket, I believe COVID has made it more difficult for parties to try and resolve cases.

Blue-sky goal:

I would like to grow our firm to 10+



attorneys with multiple offices throughout the state.

If I knew then:

Be patient.

Best tip for balance:

Work hard. When you put in the work and continue to get things done at work, you’ll have time to enjoy your personal life.

I might have been:

Either the sports field (possibly an agent) or financial services.

Guilty pleasure:

Candy and dessert.

Favorite getaway:

Florida.

A month off:

Travel internationally.

You didn’t know:

I was on the football team at Cincinnati University my freshman year. I played on the basketball team at Eastern Michigan University.

The Law Firm of  
**GARAN LUCOW MILLER, P.C.**  
proudly congratulates our colleague,  
**Kathryn L. Burkhart**  
for being honored as an  
Up & Coming Lawyer for 2021



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# Michael K. Hayes

Member, Demorest Law Firm PLLC, Cadillac  
University of Wisconsin Law School

A key part of successfully launching his firm’s presence in northern Michigan, Hayes focuses on business and real estate litigation, as well as business and real estate transactions. A member of the board of directors for Cadillac Wexford Transportation Authority and the United Way of Wexford-Missaukee Counties, he is a member of the parent advisory council at St. Ann School and has already established himself as a community leader.

**Growing up:**

I grew up in Ypsilanti, a very diverse city that afforded me the opportunity to get to know and develop friendships with people from a variety of back-grounds.

**Non-family mentor’s impact:**

My neighbor, Tom Biggs, demonstrated how to successfully balance being a dedicated father, friend, community leader and working professional. Tom was always present at his kids’ sporting and musical events, he was a long-time umpire, and he served on several community boards.

**First job:**

I worked in the concession stand, which was a generally fast-paced envi-

ronment, at Showcase Cinemas in Ann Arbor. The customer service aspects of the food service industry transfer well to the practice of law because it is important to remember that lawyers provide essential services to their clients.

**Humbling experience:**

It came during the representation of my client who ingested a lethal amount of a controlled substance. It took three doses of NARCAN to revive her, and the video is harrowing. In representing indigent clients, I have learned that people generally want to do the right things. However, due to addiction and poverty, what seems easy for us as lawyers does not come easy for those who are less fortunate.

**Biggest career challenge:**

Taking on criminal cases as part of the Wexford/Missaukee Indigent Defender Program. Prior to this, I had practically no criminal law experience. While criminal law shares some similarities with civil litigation, the stakes are typically higher because a person’s freedom, as opposed to their money or property, is at stake.

**Blue-sky goal:**

Becoming a federal court judge.

**If I knew then:**

Avoid tax classes and take class-



es that really pique my intellectual curiosity.

**Best tip for balance:**

Be present. Having a successful work/life balance is not just about the amount of time spent outside of work, it is about the quality of time you spend with your family and friends. Find hobbies that you enjoy and can share with the people you love so that the time that you spend together is meaningful and memorable.

**I might have been:**

Probably an entrepreneur in the hospitality industry.

**Guilty pleasure:**

Reality TV.

**Favorite getaway :**

Spending time in Northern Michigan, particularly Mackinac Island.

**You didn’t know:**

I play the euphonium, and have played in tuba and euphonium ensembles. I am a good whistler.



A personal injury attorney who focuses on wrongful death, auto and truck accidents, insurance disputes, as well as other forms of civil and criminal law, Hoff also handles a high volume of medical provider cases. A member of the Michigan Association for Justice, the American Association of Justice and the State Bar of Michigan, he is a contributing speaker with ICLE and a member of the Trial Lawyers Practice of the Washtenaw County Bar Association.

**Growing up:**

I was born, raised, educated, worked and lived in Sandusky almost all of my life. Sandusky is a rural agricultural area in the Thumb and growing up in a small town had a tremendous ethic.

**Non-family mentor’s impact:**

John Paterson, the attorney for whom I first worked. He was the only attorney I knew until I went to college, and he gave me a lot of good advice before I headed off to law school.

**First job:**

# Dustin C. Hoff

Trial Attorney, Christensen Law, Southfield  
Western Michigan University Thomas M. Cooley Law School

Working in my father’s ice cream shop. I learned three important lessons: how to count back money, how to talk to people, and that older people love butter pecan ice cream.

**Humbling experience:**

I covered a hearing in Detroit for another attorney; I lost the motion. Then, on my way to Ann Arbor for more hearings, a five-gallon bucket flew out of the back of a truck. It dislodged the panel that protected the undercarriage of my car. I had to be in Warren later that day to take a deposition. During the drive, I can hear the panel dragging and people looking at me, thinking “Buddy, you need to do something about that.” I arrived early. As I bent over to look under my car, the whole back side of my suit pants ripped out.

**Biggest career challenge:**

Being comfortable in front of a jury . In my early trials, I was overwhelmed at all the moving parts, information and rules. Watching trials, attending seminars, practicing and reading trial books has helped me become much more confident, but I still have a long way to go.

**Blue-sky goal:**

I would like to try 100 civil jury trials.

**If I knew then:**

Two things: Plaintiff’s counsel sits at the table closest to the jury box, and disregard all the professors who said when a judge or senior attorney asks you a question, you better have an answer. Research and personal experience taught me that if you don’t know or have an answer, just be candid. This approach — and the humility of the admission — gives you more credibility with the judge than trying to bluff your way through.

**Best tip for balance:**

While spending time with family, I shut my phone off.

**I might have been:**

Something in community planning and development.

**Guilty pleasure:**

Lemon gelato from Cantoro’s Italian Market.

**Favorite getaway:**

Nashville.

**One month off:**

I’d go backpacking in Central/Eastern Europe.

**You didn’t know:**

My eyes consist of two different colors.



# Emily M. Mayer

Partner, Jaffe Raitt Heuer & Weiss PC, Southfield  
Wayne State University Law School

Tapped earlier this year as a partner at Jaffe Raitt Heuer & Weiss, Mayer represents businesses and individuals in all areas of business litigation, including membership, partnership and shareholder disputes, contract disputes, restrictive covenants and business torts. Outside the office, she chairs the board of trustees for the Academy of Sacred Heart, sits on the Academy of Sacred Heart alumnae board, and is a member of the Oakland County Bar Association Inns of Court.

Growing up:

I grew up in Beverly Hills within miles of my entire extended family. It was wonderful; we have always been close and are traveling to Florence together next year.

Non-family mentor's impact:

I have been fortunate to work with Ethan Holtz since I started at Jaffe. Ethan is a wonderful teacher, supporter and friend who has modeled the importance of civility in our profession and taught me a lot about creative lawyering.

First job:

Summer camp counselor. I learned that I do not have the patience to work with kids and that I wanted an intellectually challenging career.

Humbling experience:

Any time I make a mistake I am humbled and reminded of how much I have yet to learn about the practice of law. Mistakes are great learning experiences because the lessons stick with you forever.

Biggest career challenge:

In my third year of practice, I had the opportunity to try a case by myself. It was terrifying, exhilarating and taught me the value of litigating every case as if it's going to trial.

Blue-sky goal:

Leave a lasting and positive impact on my workplace.

If I knew then:

You will end up exactly where you're supposed to be.

Best tip for balance:

I'm still figuring that out!

I might have been:

I honestly don't know; I planned to be a lawyer my entire life. I think I'd enjoy



editing a magazine, as I love styling and being surrounded by beautiful things.

Guilty pleasure:

Embarrassing to admit, but I like watching TV shows made for teenagers; they help turn off my brain at the end of the day.

Favorite getaway:

Paris. I love the language, history and beautiful architecture of the city.

One month off:

A dream of mine is to take a sabbatical someday and live in Paris.

You didn't know:

I am the oldest of six girls. I've been dog sledding in Quebec, cycling through and around Colonial Williamsburg, and enjoyed a cookout on a beach of a small, undeveloped island of Turks and Caicos.



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# Lawrence Opalewski Jr.

Partner, Dalton + Tomich PLC, Detroit  
University of Detroit Mercy School of Law

After just eight years, Opalewski was named a partner at Dalton + Tomich, where he leads the riparian practice and focuses on land use and zoning litigation. He also heads up the firm’s new surplus proceeds practice and has a strong interest in Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act cases. A member of the Clinton Township Planning Commission, Opalewski is active at Woodside Bible Church of Romeo and regularly participates in its volunteer community efforts.

**Growing up:**

I grew up in Macomb County. It showed me the value of hard work, and I am grateful to my parents for raising my sister and me in such a wonderful environment.

**Non-family mentor’s impact:**

Professor Julia Belian was a tremendous encouragement to me throughout my time in law school.

**First job:**

Crew member for Jet’s Pizza. I learned to do every task well, no matter how menial it might seem. A person who is trustworthy in the small things

will be entrusted with bigger things.

**Humbling experience:**

At my first oral argument before the Michigan Court of Appeals, the judges made it clear early on that my argument would not carry the day. I learned to advocate zealously no matter what, even in the face of near-certain defeat. Our clients deserve that.

**Biggest career challenge:**

Learning the “business” of being a lawyer. While law school teaches us the subject matter we need for practice, the day-to-day business aspects of being a lawyer were totally new to me. Sometimes I have to take off my lawyer hat and put on my business hat.

**Blue-sky goal:**

Argue a case before the U.S. Supreme Court.

**If I knew then:**

Don’t stress so much about number grades. While grades certainly matter, building relationships and gaining real understanding of the subject matter are more important.

**Best tip for balance:**

Guard time with family and friends



fiercely. Never sacrifice time with those you love for a few extra billing hours.

**I might have been:**

A history teacher/professor or working in the national parks.

**Guilty pleasure:**

Spicy Cheez-Its and purple Skittles.

**Favorite getaway:**

Locally, my wife and I enjoy Traverse

City. We also enjoyed our trip to Utah and its many national parks.

**One month off:**

Take a backpacking trip through portions of the Appalachian Trail or the Pacific Crest Trail.

**You didn’t know:**

I am simultaneously a huge nerd (“Star Wars,” “Lord of the Rings” etc.) and a huge sports fan (Detroit sports).

# William L. Orlewicz

Principal, Relic Law PLLC, Dearborn  
University of Detroit Mercy School of Law



Orlewicz has quickly established himself as a go-to expert in the emerging field of cybersecurity and data privacy law, dedicating his efforts to staying on top of a complicated and ever-changing field that requires constant attention to dynamic regulations on the state, federal and international level. A CMMC-AB Registered Practitioner and a Certified Information Privacy Professional, he is a member of the International Association of Privacy Professionals, the Escal Institute of Advanced Technologies and

the American Health Information Management Association.

**Growing up:**

I grew up in Detroit’s western suburbs and was influenced by the city’s automotive and industrial history. My family on both sides moved to Detroit and settled in Dearborn to work in the automotive industry. My father followed a similar path, going from skilled tradesman to entrepreneur in the mid-1980s. I learned much about hard work, success and failure, resiliency

and applying skill to a craft.

**Non-family mentor’s impact:**

Dr. Barry Pyle, an exceptional pre-law adviser and professor of political science, really helped guide me toward the legal profession.

**First job:**

My first actual job was a paper route, followed by janitorial work on weekends and building websites for local businesses. I was always interested in doing something that made me feel productive.

**Humbling experience:**

I was working on a “bet the company” deal for a client who was up against a much larger counterparty represented by a very clever senior lawyer. This lawyer really put us on our heels in the negotiation process and almost cost my client the transaction. Fortunately, I was able to maneuver and put our side back on equal footing, but it was a great lesson in respecting your opponent’s skill, while not letting them rattle you.

**Biggest career challenge:**

Finding what excited me about being a lawyer took time.

**Blue-sky goal:**

Creating a work environment that allows attorneys to pursue their profes-

sional interests and establish themselves as elite in the field is something I hope will be the legacy of what we’re building.

**If I knew then:**

Law students get so wrapped up in rankings, book awards and other activities, that they become blind to the fact that success in the law is about striving to master your craft and working hard to help your client.

**Best tip for balance:**

I make plans with friends and family every weekend. It is a necessary escape and I enjoy this time more than anything. I’m also not bashful about bringing my kids into the office. There may or may not be Mickey Mouse stickers stuck to my desk.

**I might have been:**

Technology or entrepreneurship. In my fantasy world, however, I would have become an offshore fishing boat captain.

**Guilty pleasure:**

A toss-up between electronic or blues music and bourbon.

**You didn’t know:**

I enjoy good photography. I have a large collection of Hawaiian shirts and am actively lobbying to bring the style back.



# Shanika A. Owens

Associate Attorney, Butzel Long, Detroit  
Wayne State University Law School

With a focus on corporate, real estate and regulatory law, Owens regularly counsels business clients and startups on corporate governance and issues surrounding governmental compliance. A board member of Avalon Healing and the Great Lakes Environmental Law Center, she also serves as a member of the State Bar’s Representative Assembly, co-chairs Butzel’s Pro Bono Committee and is an active member of Detroit Sisters in Law and the African American Associates Collaborative.

Growing up:

I grew up on Detroit’s west side. I often spent my days at my grandma’s house. The environment taught me that ambition has its rewards and discipline pays off.

Non-family mentor’s impact:

Geaneen Arends has been pivotal in helping me shape my career path. Geaneen has blazed the trail for young lawyers like me. She has been extremely supportive, a huge resource on the job and an invaluable resource when it comes to day-to-day life and managing motherhood.

First job:

Policy analyst for the Detroit City

Council. I was inspired to become a lawyer. Several issues arose leading up to the city’s restructuring that made me realize the importance of having good advocates on one’s side. I learned to analyze complex issues, but I also learned that compassion and service to others is key.

Humbling experience:

When I walked into Huron Valley Women’s Correctional Facility to assist a pro bono client for a prisoner’s rights case. It was my first time stepping into a prison and my first time engaging with an inmate. I saw the humanity in her, not just the number assigned to those in the prison population. Through the conversation with the client, I realized the commonalities that we all share. I was counting my blessings walking out the door while feeling empowered and grateful to be assigned to the case.

Biggest career challenge:

It took me a while to find my niche. I am still honing my skills, and learning what I enjoy best and diving deeper into those areas.

If I knew then:

Coursework provides a foundation, but the actual practice of law is truly a daily practice. There is no experience



like sorting out complex issues beyond the books.

Best tip for balance:

Be authentic with yourself and others about what your needs are so that you manage expectations. Communicate clearly and take time when you need it. Build in breaks and times to decompress while clearly managing timelines.

I might have been:

Public service and public policy.

Guilty pleasure:

I binge watch “Family Feud” and the Game Show Network.

Favorite getaway:

Anywhere with a beach and access to the ocean.

One month off:

I would take a road trip to visit various national parks and vegan restaurants across the country.

You didn’t know:

I practice martialaArts and I love indoor cycling classes.

# Megan J. Parpart

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# Katherine M. Pacynski

Shareholder, The Dobrusin Law Firm PC, Pontiac  
Michigan State University College of Law

Pacynski started at The Dobrusin Law Firm as a law clerk and worked her way up to shareholder in the field of patent law, leveraging her chemical engineering degree. The president of the Women’s Bar Association, she is a barrister of the Michigan Intellectual Property Inn of Court, a recent graduate of Leadership Oakland, Class XXIX and a volunteer for Art&Soul Dreams.

**Growing up:**

I grew up on a lake in Highland. My paternal grandparents had a cottage a few houses down, and my cousins had a cottage on the other side of the lake. I truly got to appreciate the value and closeness of family.

**Important non-family mentor:**

Kristen Pursley has been an exceptional mentor for me. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge Eric Dobrusin as another mentor.

**First job:**

Gymnastics coach at the gym where I trained as a kid. One particular gymnast still sticks out. She had a rough home life and I spent time trying to get to know her. She eventually started to trust me and the girls on her team. When I went off to college, she gave

me a stuffed animal as a thank you gift. I still have it as a reminder that treating people with respect and being patient with them can make a huge impact, and one person really can make a difference in the life of someone else.

**Humbling experience:**

I find my line of work constantly humbling. Our clients are some incredibly intelligent people. I’m constantly learning new things, but it’s never easy to admit when I don’t immediately understand something or don’t know the answer to a question right away.

**Biggest career challenge:**

COVID-19. I have a 3-year-old and an 18-month-old, and from March through September 2020, they were home the entire time. My husband and I had to juggle being parents, educators and constant supervisors to our daredevils, as well as full-time attorneys.

**Blue-sky goal:**

Grow the firm and our clients’ intellectual property portfolios, without losing our firm’s current culture.

**If I knew then:**

Focus less on knowing the facts of every single case, and worry more about forming and keeping relationships with the people you meet.



**Best tip for balance:**

On Sundays, I write out my commitments and appointments for the week, my deadlines, and the other things I hope to accomplish. It helps to see it all written down.

**I might have been:**

An engineer.

**Guilty pleasure:**

I love to sit in my overstuffed chair in my sunroom with a glass of wine and a book.

**Favorite getaway:**

Round Hill in Jamaica.

**One month off:**

Travel.

**You didn’t know:**

A one-credit elective I took on a whim in undergrad — Law for Engineers — with a single lecture devoted to patent law, completely changed my career course. I was the fourth woman in my family to wear my wedding dress.



In his relatively short career, Pacynski has made significant contributions in more than 60 M&A transactions, closing more than a dozen with aggregate consideration exceeding \$600 million in 2019 alone. He is the youngest person to serve as Clark Hill’s corporate counsel in the firm’s 130-year history. A member of the Detroit Goodfellows, Pacynski regularly performs pro bono work for nonprofit corporations in Southeast Michigan and frequently attends Association for Corporate Growth and NextGen events.

**Growing up:**

I grew up in southeastern Michigan. It instilled in me a Midwestern pride that strengthens my connections with Michigan clients.

**Non-family mentor’s impact:**

John Hensien, Clark Hill’s current CEO, has had a meaningful influence and particularly helped shape my career.

**First job:**

Dishwasher at a banquet center. I

# Steven R. Pacynski

Member, Clark Hill PLC, Detroit  
Michigan State University College of Law

learned that all people and all roles are important to a business.

**Humbling experience:**

I regularly am dealing with attorneys on the other side of a transaction who are from well-known law firms. There have been several instances when negotiating a purchase agreement where I have been impressed by the creative arguments made by the other side. It can be humbling to negotiate with such talented and intelligent individuals.

**Biggest career challenge:**

Working during the first few months of the pandemic. While many places — including the daycare my daughters attended — were shut down, clients still needed legal advice. My wife and I found ourselves juggling the responsibilities of having two young children under 2.5 years old at home and our responsibilities to clients and our firms. This made for long nights (and not nearly enough hours in the day) but we persevered and were able to continue successfully representing our respective clients.

**Blue-sky goal:**

Ultimately serve on the firm’s executive committee or in some other capacity as a leader of the firm.

**If I knew then:**

Get involved in clinics or other activities that provide a practical approach to learning.

**Best tip for balance:**

Marry someone in the profession — that’s what I did! — so that your spouse better understands and appreciates the commitment to work and clients.

**I might have been:**

Pursued a career involving psychology and business.

**Guilty pleasure:**

University of Michigan sports.

**Favorite getaway:**

Anywhere with a beach.

**One month off:**

Take a vacation with my family (and probably try to golf more than I do now).

**You didn’t know:**

I was a varsity cheerleader at the University of Michigan, which is how I met my wife. I severely injured my neck/spine at a young age and had to wear a neck brace for a year.



# Megan J. Parpart

Partner/Shareholder, Howard & Howard Attorneys PLLC, Royal Oak  
Michigan State University College of Law

Business and corporate law form the core of Parpart's practice, including mergers and acquisitions, asset purchases, stock/membership interest purchases, business formation and dissolution, employment agreements and general contractual matters. She also advises the firm's clients on taxation and tax incentive programs and is an integral part of the firm's Opportunity Zone Team. Parpart is a member of the Business Law and Taxation sections of the State Bar and a member of the board of directors of the Michigan Women's Tax Association.

**Growing up:**

I grew up in a very small town in Southern Illinois, where everybody knows everybody and it was a very working-class area. I knew most of the business owners and I saw early on the difficulties associated with owning your own business. This formed the basis of my understanding that I still use in my career today in working with business owners and businesses of all sizes.

**Non-family mentor's impact:**

An important mentor for me is one of my partners at Howard & Howard, Gina Staudacher. I have learned so much

both personally and professionally. There is no doubt my career would look substantially different if not for her mentorship and friendship.

**First job:**

Working in the concession stand at the baseball fields in my town. I got to meet and interact with lots of people and I learned the value of networking.

**Humbling experience:**

Volunteering to provide income tax assistance as a law student and as a lawyer. Hearing the challenges that people face in dealing with the IRS, often through no fault of their own, is humbling as you realize the power a government bureaucracy holds over the taxpayer and the difficulty that many taxpayers face in dealing with these issues.

**Biggest career challenge:**

2020 and the pandemic were very challenging. So much was changing at such a rapid pace, with multiple rounds of stimulus legislation, it was challenging to learn all the new laws while working with clients to navigate the new challenges and trying to advise my own family business on pandemic-related issues. Ultimately, it was an invaluable learning experience, but there was definitely a steep learning curve.



**Blue-sky goal:**

I've been a huge fan of "Saturday Night Live" since I was in middle school and my dream has always been to host the show. Specifically I want to say, "Live from New York, it's Saturday Night!" I realize I may have entered the wrong line of work to accomplish this goal.

**If I knew then:**

Network more; get to know more professors and professional attorneys while you are still in law school.

**Best tip for balance:**

Ask for help when you need it. Surround yourself with people who support your professional and personal goals.

**I might have been:**

Doctor.

**Guilty pleasure:**

Baking and watching "Law & Order: SVU."

**Favorite getaway:**

Bora Bora.



Congratulations!

Stephanie M. Brochert

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Congratulations to our colleague Stephanie Brochert on her selection as a 2021 MiLW Up & Coming Lawyer! She is a tireless advocate for her national property and casualty insurance clients. From environmental contamination, construction defect and high-exposure product liability claims, she is always determined, distinctive and fearless in her pursuit of the right results for her clients!

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# John F. Rhoades

Member, Dykema Gossett PLLC, Detroit  
University of Michigan Law School

A experienced trial attorney who has litigated claims successfully to conclusion in state and federal courts in three states, Rhoades concentrates his practice on financial services and commercial litigation. He helped establish — and was elected chair of — the Dykema Associates Committee, organizes the firm’s participation in charitable events and serves as a summer associate mentor. Rhoades is involved in the Federal Bar Association, the Mortgage Bankers Association and the state bars of Illinois, Wisconsin and Michigan.

**Growing up:**

I grew up in Detroit. The diversity of my neighborhood gave me a greater appreciation and understanding of the value of diverse perspectives and backgrounds. The music in my home and at church had a lasting impact on me as well.

**Non-family mentor’s impact:**

The late John Joseph Hughes III coached many of my youth sports teams and was a Scout leader. He taught me the fundamentals of those games, but also the important life lesson that the assist is more important than the score.

**First job:**

Cutting grass in my neighborhood. I learned you can earn respect and trust by working hard and being dependable.

**Humbling experience:**

Attending my firm’s member meeting. It’s humbling to hear from such accomplished and knowledgeable colleagues who have a mastery of complex legal fields. It is always interesting, but very humbling.

**Biggest career challenge:**

Delivering excellent client service while still making time for providing constructive feedback and mentorship to associates. I volunteer as a summer associate mentor and participate on professional development panels when possible, but I wish I had more time for those types of activities because I really enjoy teaching and working with our younger attorneys.

**Blue-sky goal:**

To have a well-attended and fun retirement party that guests are excited to go to.

**If I knew then:**

Study hard, but worry less about grades than the subject matter. Get to know your professors. Continue to have as much fun as possible.



**Best tip for balance:**

Learn how to say “no.”

**I might have been:**

Teacher. I taught English and Spanish at the University of Detroit Jesuit High School, my alma mater, for one year after college. I also coached the JV soccer team and worked with the theater program. I very much enjoyed it.

**Guilty pleasure:**

Snickers ice cream bars.

**Favorite getaway:**

Santorini.

**A month off:**

Read. Take my son on walks, bike rides and camping trips.

**You didn’t know:**

I was a member of the University of Michigan Men’s Glee Club in college and law school. I was crowned “Mr. Wolverine” in a law school variety show/fundraiser event.

# Katherine K. Roskam

Partner, Varnum LLP, Grand Rapids  
Loyola University Chicago School of Law



Roskam works with both the Tax and Employee Benefits practice teams at Varnum, serves on the Associate Recruiting and Retention Committee, co-leads the summer associate program and sits on the Benefits Committee. A member of the Visionnaire Executive Committee of the Grand Rapids Art Museum and the Advisory Committee of the Muskegon Innovation Hub, she sits on the board of the Michigan Chapter of the ESOP Association and chairs the State Bar’s Young Tax Lawyers Committee.

**Growing up:**

I grew up in Muskegon. My parents work at our family business — a bowling ball manufacturing company — that was started by my grandfather. Growing up in an entrepreneurial home helped me in my legal career. Seeing my family navigate small business ownership has made me appreciate the struggles of small business owners and better understand what they need from their attorneys.

**Non-family mentor’s impact:**

Kim Clarke, a partner in the Immigration Group at Varnum, has been an amazing mentor. She has helped me navigate my legal career, and has provided invaluable advice about juggling parenthood and work, among other issues. Without her guidance, I wouldn’t be where I am today.

**First job:**

My family owns a bowling ball manufacturing company, and my sister and I worked on the evening cleaning crew for the company’s corporate office. This taught me the value of hard work, and I bonded with my sister over our experiences.

**Humbling experience:**

Leaving law school and my LLM program, I felt pretty confident in my skills. Once I got to Varnum, I listened Jeff DeVree, Kap Jones, and Eric Nemeth talk to clients, come up with solutions to complex problems on the spot, and rattle off tax law from memory as if they were reading it from the code, and I was blown away. I remember thinking, “I have so much to learn.”

**Biggest career challenge:**

Picking one area and focusing on that. There are so many areas of the

law that interest me.

**Blue-sky goal:**

Take on additional leadership roles at the firm.

**If I knew then:**

Don’t be so stressed. As long as you work hard, and make those deadlines, it will work out.

**Best tip for balance:**

After work, I put down my phone and give my kids and stepkids 100% of my attention for at least one hour. The stress of the day melts away, and it helps us to connect.

**I might have been:**

Art historian or archeologist.

**Guilty pleasure:**

Ordering Ben & Jerry’s on a home delivery app. I can’t have it in the house, but sometimes at night, my husband and I cave, and we order it up.

**Favorite getaway:**

The beach in my hometown in the summer really can’t be beat for me.

**You didn’t know:**

I was an art history and international studies double major in college. I don’t drink coffee.



# Lynn B. Sholander

Associate, Collins Einhorn Farrell PC, Southfield  
Wayne State University Law School

Sholander centers her practice on appellate and post-verdict litigation. She's a member of the firm's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, and also serves as editor of the firm's blog, Driving Forward. Active in the Professional Development Committee of the Oakland County Bar Association and the Appellate Practice Section of the State Bar, Sholander also serves on the District I Character and Fitness Committee.

Growing up:

Growing up in Livonia impacted me in two significant ways. I was able to attend great schools with magnet programs that prepared me well for college, and I lived only 10 minutes away from my grandparents and saw them multiple times per week. They helped my family in countless ways and had a large impact on my work ethic and personal growth.

Non-family mentor's impact:

Former Justice Kurtis Wilder hired me as a temporary judicial law clerk during my first year after law school and forever influenced the way that I approach the law. He has a wonderful legal mind, but he's also an incredible man. Our conversations over the past

seven years have helped me grow personally and professionally, especially when it comes to balancing work, family and faith.

First job:

McDonald's. It made me realize just how difficult it can be to work in food service.

Humbling experience:

As a brand new lawyer, I drafted a research report at the Court of Appeals based on the wrong version of a statute. My research supervisor pointed out the error and emphasized the importance of always checking statutory amendments, effective dates and subsequent history. I was mortified, but I've been hypervigilant ever since!

Biggest career challenge:

Overcoming my fear of oral argument. When I graduated from law school, I vowed that I would never go to court. I eventually learned to love it!

Blue-sky goal:

A judge or justice in an appellate court.

If I knew then:

Don't get so lost in the everyday grind of law school. What seems like a life or death situation now will seem so manageable once you're in the real world.



Best tip for balance:

Make sure that your ultimate identity and sense of self-worth aren't rooted in your work.

I might have been:

Elementary education!

Guilty pleasure:

Watching cooking videos online. Once I start watching them, I have a hard time stopping. It's ridiculous.

Favorite getaway:

Zion National Park, London, and

Kraków, Poland.

A month off:

Read, journal, travel, and visit friends and family members.

You didn't know:

A bat landed on my back in high school and likely bit me, so I had to get a round of rabies shots as a result. It sounds scary — and it was — but the full story is hilarious. I was born with turned-in feet and femur bones. Thankfully, my feet and legs are straight now thanks to many years of ballet!



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## Is your firm celebrating a special anniversary or milestone this year?



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# Lisa W. Timmons

Executive Director, Mediation Tribunal Association, Detroit  
Detroit Mercy State School of Law

As executive director of the Mediation Tribunal Association and the Alternative Dispute Resolution Clerk of Wayne County Circuit Court, Timmons mediates Equal Employment Opportunity disputes for the U.S. Postal Service, discovery motions for Oakland County Circuit Court and pro se prison cases for the U.S. District Court. She is an adjunct professor at her alma mater, and sits on the board of directors of the Detroit Bar Association and the council of the ADR Section of the State Bar.

Growing up:

I grew up in Detroit, attended Cass Technical High School and loved everything about the city. I am glad to be able to work in the heart of downtown Detroit and the rebirth of the city has been fantastic to watch.

Non-family mentor's impact:

Two women positively influenced me: Judge Cynthia D. Stephens and Judge Kathleen Macdonald. Knowing both of these women has strongly influenced and impacted me to be the lawyer, community servant and mentor I am today.

First job:

House Page with the Michigan State

House of Representatives when I was an undergrad at Michigan State University. I was appointed by then-Rep. Burton Leland. I learned so much about government, policymaking and networking.

Humbling experience:

Having my grandmother being able to attend my graduation and swearing-in ceremony. She was 90 years old at the time and she sacrificed so much to make sure her children and grandchildren had the support they needed to go to college and graduate school.

Biggest career challenge:

The pandemic. I had never heard of Zoom and had never been on a video-conference. The process of learning about a VPN, videoconferencing and remote work arrangements — all while trying to secure PPE for the office and keep myself and my family safe — was a huge commitment.

Blue-sky goal:

Walk in the shoes of local attorneys Harold Pope, Reginald Turner and Dennis Archer and have a leadership role with the American Bar Association.

If I knew then:

I went to law school as a second career while in my 40s, so I was a different person than if I had attended



straight after undergrad. I went four years straight, part-time in the evenings while working full-time during the day. Honestly, I was afraid that if I took a summer off I would quit, so I just kept going!

Best tip for balance:

I have a picture of my son on my desk with the caption “remember your why” underneath. I want my son and people that I mentor to know that dreams can come true through hard work and persistence.

I might have been:

I was a disability rights advocate before.

Guilty pleasure:

My Peloton bike. I’m coming up on my “century ride” (100th ride).

Favorite getaway:

Zoetry Spa in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic.

A month off:

Be on the beach and write a blog or book.

# Ford J.H. Turrell

Partner, Warner Norcross + Judd LLP, Grand Rapids  
Michigan State University College of Law



Turrell’s practice consists of transactional counseling for the real estate and corporate sectors, with experience spanning across a variety of industries including agriculture, commercial office and retail leases, distributors, manufacturing, oil and gas, real estate development, retail and restaurants. He was selected as one of just six attorneys at the firm to be part of its COVID-19 Response Team, recently completed a term on the board of directors for Embody, and volunteers with the Hospice of

Michigan Foundation.

Growing up:

I grew up in Kentwood, a suburb of Grand Rapids. I’d credit growing up in Michigan for my love of being outside and in the water.

Non-family mentor's impact:

I spent a year clerking for Judge David W. McKeague on the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. The way he conducted himself professionally and how he

interacted with those that worked for him taught me I could push myself beyond what I believed I was capable of. He expected excellence in both an individual’s character and quality of work. Working with him showed me that I could set high expectations for myself, and achieve them.

First job:

Bag boy for Crystal Springs Country Club. The job taught me to appreciate physical labor, how to balance and differentiate relationships between members of the country club, my superiors and colleagues, and how to create a disciplined routine to get up early and report for work.

Biggest career challenge:

The hardest part of my career journey was being a nontraditional law student with two kids and two jobs. My children were both under the age of 4, I was working as an adjunct professor and as a law clerk and student employee for a law firm. My days would be crammed with teaching, attending law school classes, followed by writing memos and doing research for the law firm. When I didn’t have night classes, I’d do homework, prep for the classes I was teaching and try to spend some time with the family. We got through it as a team — one day at a time.

Blue-sky goal:

I’m more of a person who lives in the moment. I find fulfillment in my family and career and want to continue focusing on impacting and supporting my clients in a positive way.

If I knew then:

Relax!

Best tip for balance:

Daily meditation has taught me how to be present, calm my unrelenting thoughts and focus on being healthy and productive.

I might have been:

Professional songwriter or surfer.

Guilty pleasure:

I surf in the winter in Lake Michigan.

Favorite getaway:

The beach. Any beach.

A month off:

Take my wife and kids on a trip around the U.S.

You didn’t know:

I am a songwriter and have had several songs placed on network television programs. I’m a big fan of frozen yogurt, specifically Spoonlickers in the Grand Rapids area.



# Anna Valk

Member, Kerr, Russell and Weber, PLC, Detroit  
University of Detroit Mercy School of Law

Valk helps clients protect and maximize the value of their real estate assets. Her practice focuses on all aspects of selling, purchasing, leasing and financing of real estate projects and her experience includes drafting and negotiating real estate purchase agreements, commercial leases, construction documents – including architect and contractor agreements – and other real property agreements, including easements and licenses. Valk has been involved in planning and coordinating Motor City Pride for six years, and is passionate about animal rescue efforts.

Growing up:

My family moved to Michigan from Riga, Latvia, when I was 4, and I grew up in the Southfield and West Bloomfield areas. The combination of the moves forced me to learn to adapt quickly, which has been a great asset to navigating my career and life in general.

Non-family mentor's impact:

Brandy Mathie and I both started at the firm around the same time — she as an experienced real estate lawyer

from another big firm and me as a brand new associate. She took me under her wing and taught me the ins and outs of real estate and the practical aspects of being an effective and efficient lawyer. Without her guidance and support, I might be a litigator!

First job:

Making bagels. I gained a profound respect for those working behind the scenes every day.

Humbling experience:

Early in my career, I initially missed something in a document that could have had a major impact on my client's position. I learned a couple things: to slow down and the importance of thinking through and presenting possible solutions when communicating the issue with a client or colleague.

Biggest career challenge:

A complex real estate transaction with a lot of moving parts, including creation of a site condominium, negotiation and management of a construction contract for a major expansion and coordination of a purchase and sale.

Blue-sky goal:

Become a leader in the field.



If I knew then:

Don't be afraid of stepping out of your comfort zone to learn new things.

Best tip for balance:

Time management and maintaining boundaries.

I might have been:

In the medical field — another field where there are daily opportunities to learn.

Guilty pleasure:

Shopping (for my kids).

Favorite getaway:

Western Michigan.

A month off:

Travel with my family.

You didn't know:

English was not my first language. I grew up wanting to play center for the Detroit Red Wings.



## Congratulations to KEVIN D. BATTLE, JR. “Doing What’s Right.”

Kevin practices immigration law and has set a standard for giving of his time, energy, and knowledge to help those in need. Kevin helps employers with foreign employees and also assists foreign nationals and their families to enter the United States and maintain the appropriate status.

Kevin’s experience as a practitioner has led to volunteering with nonprofit organizations that support historically underrepresented and disadvantaged members of our communities.

As a proud alum of the University of Notre Dame Law School, Kevin takes Coach Lou Holtz’s words of wisdom to heart every day: “I follow three rules: Do the right thing, do the best you can, and always show people you care.”

Kevin’s positive and enthusiastic approach to service is what set him up to be a champion for years to come.





# MICHIGAN Lawyers Weekly

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