



The Pre-Law e-Newsletter from Pre-Professional Programs & Advising

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Friday, February 4, 2011 – Thursday, February 17, 2011

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1. MESSAGE FROM ANA L. DROSCOSKI, ESQ.

Welcome Back! I hope everyone had a restful and enjoyable break and that the first week of Spring semester started without a hitch.

For a while now, there has been a lot of press regarding the struggling legal market, especially when compared to law school matriculation rates. Referenced below is a buzz-worthy, recent article. Perhaps just as daunting as facing a wobbly legal market upon law school graduation is facing a six-figure debt load. To help mitigate this concern, included below are planning tips and resources for financing a legal education. If you think law school is in your future, you should be certain how you will and what it will take to pay for it!

2. MEDIA WATCH: "IS LAW SCHOOL A LOSING GAME?"

On January 8, 2011, *The New York Times* featured an article by David Segal entitled, "Is Law School a Losing Game?" It spent weeks as the most frequently emailed article by NYTimes.com readers. The article prompted and continues to prompt discussion.

"Is Law School a Losing Game?" follows the life of one recent law school graduate who has not fared well in the current legal market and discusses the fallibility of law school graduate employment statistics and reports. If you have not read it already, be sure to take a look: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/09/business/09law.html>

To read more about the cost of law school/debt load and law school graduate job rate statistics, see the following additional articles:

[Law students in search of jobs](#), by Sam Petulla, *Inside Higher Ed*, January 5, 2011.

[Getting schooled in law loans](#), by Stephanie Landsman, *CNBC.com*, December 31, 2010.

3. FINANCING A LEGAL EDUCATION

"The cost of a law school education could exceed \$150,000. Tuition alone can range from a few thousand dollars to more than \$50,000 a year. When calculating the total cost of attending law school, you also have to include the cost of housing, food, books, transportation, and personal expenses. Law schools will [determine the student expense budget](#) for you. Today, approximately 80 percent of law school students rely on education loans as their primary, but not exclusive, source of financial aid for law school.

The single best source of information about financing a legal education is the financial aid office (or the website) of any LSAC-member law school.” (See: <http://www.lsac.org/jd/finance/financial-aid-overview.asp>)

Access Group provides a great workbook/e-Book entitled “Financing your Legal Education: What’s What, What Comes Next, and How to Do It.” You can access it -- and print, to use it now! – via the following link:

<http://www.accessgroup.org/E-books/Financing-Your-Legal-Education/view.html>

If you are interested in pursuing a career in public interest law, but have concerns about reconciling expected (lesser) salary with education debt-load, know that there are a wealth of loan repayment assistance programs and other resources available to you. Be sure to research information on the College Cost Reduction & Access Act of 2007 and the Higher Education Reauthorization and College Opportunity Act of 2008, and note the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Checklist, all of which can be found at the following Equal Justice Works web-link:

<http://www.equaljusticeworks.org/resources/student-debt-relief>

4. INTERVIEW: MINDY G. FARBER, ESQ., EMPLOYMENT & LABOR LAW ATTORNEY

Mindy G. Farber is a nationally respected employment and labor law attorney based in Rockville, Maryland. She has practiced law for 28 years and is a Board Member of the National Center for Labor and Employment Law. Ms. Farber has extensive experience working with both management and employees.

Ms. Farber represents clients in all matters relating to employment and labor law, including sexual harassment, discrimination, compensation, non-compete agreements, academic issues, the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), and federal service regulatory law. In addition, Ms. Farber represents clients in the related areas of constitutional law, business law and civil litigation.

In 1974, Ms. Farber graduated *summa cum laude* from The Johns Hopkins University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History. In 1977, Ms. Farber graduated from New York University School of Law, earning her Juris Doctor degree. While in law school, Ms. Farber was awarded the Root Tilden Scholarship for merit and the Labor Law Prize. In addition, she is a member of Phi Beta Kappa and Omicron Delta Kappa.

Early in her career, Ms. Farber served as an attorney in the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Labor; Vice-President of the Baltimore Women’s Law Center; and Partner in the Bethesda law firm of Paley, Rothman, Goldstein, Rosenberg & Cooper.

Ms. Farber has written or been the subject of articles in the following publications: “How to Build and Manage an Employment Law Practice” (ABA Press); chapter on employment law in *Global Competition and the American Employment Landscape As We Enter the 21st Century*; chapter on employment law in “Flying Solo” (ABA press); articles in “Challenge of Controversy;” *The Woman Advocate*; Marketing Success stories; papers for the Institute of Judicial Administration and the Center for Labor and Employment Law on disability, security, leave, and age discrimination; cover articles in “Law Practice Management Magazine” (ABA Press); and articles in *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*.

Ms. Farber is admitted to practice before all State and Federal Courts in Maryland, all local and Federal Courts in the District of Columbia, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit Court. She is a member of the Bar of Maryland and the District of Columbia Bar.

1) Describe a day in the life of an Employment & Labor Law Attorney:

I have practiced employment and labor law for more than thirty years, first at a large law firm, then in the government (both for the US Department of Labor and the Justice Department), next as a partner at a medium sized firm, and finally, as the founder of my own practice.

In the last two years, as a result of technological advances and my own (kicking and screaming) willingness to learn how to master some of the technology, I have been able to do most of my work from my pleasant home office. The advantages are that I have no commute, can take breaks to run errands and walk my two dogs, and make meals at reasonable hours (*eating* meals at reasonable hours is another matter). The disadvantages are that on three days a week, I have no one physically nearby to talk to me about my work (although I am on the telephone a great part of each day), and I eat a lot of potato chips and Raisinets. How I stay thin amidst all this makes another, maybe a better, story. Also, my mother, who has attended Hopkins graduations (two children and three out of four grandchildren) from 1967 to 2008, thinks my working from home is not really *working* from home, and calls me during the day to tell me about various family members' accidents, illnesses, and financial disasters. On Thursdays and Fridays, my husband -- who foolishly went to Duke instead of Hopkins and eventually to Yale Law School -- works from home, which is a bonus for me as I work.

On a typical day, I get up, use the exercise bike for a half hour and read the newspaper, then check emails and respond. I stop my written work three or four times a day to return telephone calls. I deal with matters ranging from discrimination (age, race, sex, sexual harassment, disability, and national origin) to wage/hour disputes, to interpretation of non-compete clauses, to negotiating severance agreements for employees or employers. I give advice to corporate clients and employees alike (I represent both sides); draft agreements; bargain and deal-make (my husband jokingly -- I think -- calls me Queen of the Shake-downs); and also do a lot of work with federal agencies and federal employees. I attend mediations, arbitrations, litigate in court, and write motions and briefs. I will say, however, that as I count the number of years I have been an attorney in disbelief, I try to preserve my remaining repose by curtailing how much I engage in litigation. Too stressful -- I leave it to (typically) males in their late 30's with eyes still flashing and hands burning to **demolish** the other side. My killer instinct, sadly, is waning.

2) What initially attracted you to this field? What are some of the rewards of this area of law and the legal profession?

I decided to focus on employment and labor law because I was attracted to the idea of practicing civil rights and riding the white horse. I liked working with people in distress. In the earlier years, the passage of new laws in my field was exhilarating and challenging: pregnancy discrimination laws; sexual harassment laws; the Americans with Disabilities Act; and the Family and Medical Leave Act, among them. I could make and have made a very good living while doing good. Indeed, I smashed the anti-epilepsy laws against public servants in the District of Columbia and had the first successful transgender discrimination case in the country.

3) What are some of the downsides of this area of law? How would you compare the reality of your profession to the picture you had of it while in school?

The disadvantage of what I do is that I deal with -- as Woody Allen carved up the world in *Annie Hall* -- the horrible and the miserable. Many of my clients are either losing a job or have already been fired. They perceive themselves as total victims, and generally have no thought that they could have done anything to contribute to their situation. As a result, they are angry, often unreasonable, and full of entitlement. Sometimes I feel like I am a psychiatrist more than I am an attorney. As the economy has worsened, the number of employees losing their jobs in the worst possible years for getting new work -- employees in their 50's and 60's -- are multiplying rapidly. It takes all my inner resources and experience to try to negotiate settlements that can ease some of the pain and loss. Most of my clients are grateful and good people in a tough world, but some of them are mean and revengeful. And just as they displayed behavior that led to a firing, that same kind of behavior can easily be turned on the attorney. It is not an easy way to earn a living, as interesting as many days are. You have to be smart, but you also have to be tough.

4) Do you have any advice for an undergraduate interested in pursuing this body of law and the legal profession?

The best way to get a foot in the door of employment law is to intern the first and second year of law school with civil rights agencies and/or law firms that have a lively employment law practice. Don't feel you have to choose one side or the other: in the early years, get as much experience with management as plaintiffs, and vice versa. It is easier to go from the management side to the plaintiff side, rather than

the other way around. Make sure you are a people person. If not, this area of the law will eat you up and spit you out.

Contact Information

If you would like to learn more about employment and labor law or have additional questions for Ms. Farber, you may reach her via email at: Mfarber@rcn.com. For general information about labor & employment law, Ms. Farber recommends the EEOC website, <http://www.eeoc.gov/>, particularly the laws and regulations section(s).

5. UPCOMING PRE-LAW MEETINGS AND PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

Upcoming LSAT Administration for 2011

Location: Check with LSAC for testing locations (next on campus/JHU LSAT administration – Monday, June 6, 2011).

Date: Saturday, February 12, 2011; Monday, June 6, 2011

Time: Registration begins at 8:30am for the February exam, 12:30pm for the June exam -- consult with LSAC for all controlling details.

DC-Metro Area Law School Admissions Panel

Location: TBD

Date: TBD

Time: TBD

The Insiders' Scoop: JHU Alums/Current Law School Students & First Year Associates

Location: TBD

Date: TBD

Time: TBD

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### **STAFF IN THE OFFICE OF PRE-PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS AND ADVISING**

Ana L. Droscoski, J.D., Assistant Director, Pre-Law Advisor, Pre-Dental & Pre-Health Advisor

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The Administrative Coordinators are available to answer questions regarding your file:

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Please feel free to use the resource library between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. every day or visit our website <http://web.jhu.edu/prepro/> for additional information.

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