

NEVADA LAWYER GOES TO THE DOGS

(AND CATS, AND BIRDS,
AND SNAKES).

COMPILED AND EDITED BY MELINDA CATREN,
NEVADA LAWYER STAFF

ATTORNEY:

Dawn R. Miller, Esq.

FURRY FRIEND: **Nemo**

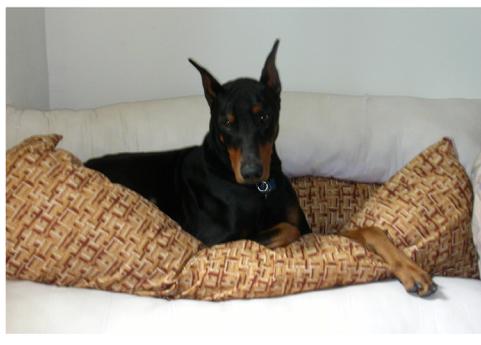
After being accepted to law school in California, my Doberman Pinscher, Nemo, and I packed our things and headed off to begin the next chapter of my life.

Finding a place to live with a Doberman was a challenge and the search continued even after classes had started. But Nemo made it easy to persevere. Every night when I got home from class, there he was, peeking his head out the window, wagging his tail, letting me know how happy he was to see me. I was amazed at how well he behaved: no accidents, no destruction, no barking. It was like he was letting me know he could handle all the change and that we would get through this together.

I finally found an apartment by making Nemo a “lab mix” on paper. It was a risk, but within weeks Nemo had won the hearts of every neighbor on my floor. They weren’t alone. All the students, professors and administrators came to know Nemo. Everyone

was crazy about him. The ladies in the financial aid office would invite him upstairs so they could pet him. My professors would let him visit at their offices.

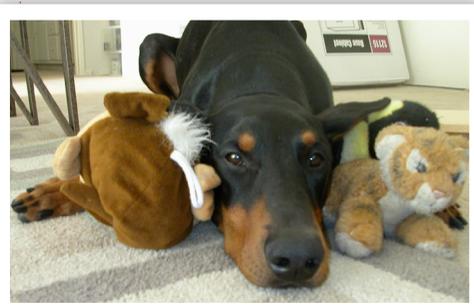
Nemo brought joy and laughter to everyone he met. But he brought the most joy and love to me. Law school was a wonderful but difficult experience. The work seems endless, with little time for recreation. During hours of studying, Nemo would sit by me and lay his head on my lap because he knew I needed that gentle affection. He’d bring me a squeaky toy to coax me into ten minutes of laughter and play and, when I really needed a break, we would drive to the nearby dog beach where Nemo would play



Nemo

LAWYERS ARE (ANIMAL) PEOPLE TOO!

SOME SITUATIONS IN A WORKING LAWYER’S LIFE ARE STRICTLY FOR THE BIRDS. SO IT’S NOT SURPRISING THAT MANY OF US THINK THAT OUR FURRY (AND FEATHERED) FRIENDS ARE THE CAT’S MEOW WHEN THINGS BECOME LESS THAN PURRRFECT. HERE, SOME OF THE STATE BAR OF NEVADA’S MEMBERS WEIGH IN ON HOW THEIR PETS HELP SAVE THEIR SANITY WHEN THINGS GET DOGGONE ‘RUFF’!



in the ocean and I would breathe in some fresh air and remind myself of the beautiful place in which we lived.

While having Nemo presented extra challenges, he provided more companionship, happiness and love than words could ever describe. He was then, and always will be, my most loyal best friend.

ATTORNEY: Cathy Weise, Esq.
FURRY FRIEND: Puff

Frantically trying to find a place to deposit my Coton, Puff, before a mediation, I decided to bring her into the room and let her lie under my chair. Everyone ignored her for the most part. However, in the middle of a particularly emotional outburst from one of the parties, Puff got up, placed her paws on his knees, laid her head between them... and simply looked up at him.

That moment provided welcome relief for all of us, changed the climate in the room, and provided that empathic connection with another person that we attorneys sometimes tend to avoid when wearing our professional personas. The parties ultimately settled and I believe that moment altered the direction of the dispute.

I've not had the occasion to bring Puff to work with me again, but often think that she might be the better mediator.



Weise has recently taken up painting; Puff is her only subject.

ATTORNEY: Daniel S. Harris, Esq.
A SCALY TALE: A Romantic Hissssssssstory

I am allergic to most fur and feathers, which greatly limited the types of pets I can have. Desperate for any type of pet that didn't swim, I got a Ball Python when I was in college. I named him Oscar.

Most women, perhaps unsurprisingly, were turned off by the snake. When I met Ziva at a college get-together, I didn't really notice her until I observed how much she liked Oscar. The feeling seemed to be mutual; after being removed



from his cage Oscar almost immediately started to crawl into Ziva's pocket. Then I noticed how pretty Ziva was. She and I had incredible chemistry... and she liked snakes!

Two-and-a-half months after we met, Ziva and I got engaged. She called home that night and put me on the phone with her mom, who happily welcomed me to the family. Oscar passed away during the same night. While I was sad, I felt that my pet had accomplished a mission by finding the right person for me, and then moving on. Ziva and I recently celebrated our 17th wedding anniversary.

Thank you Oscar the snake.

ATTORNEY: Del Hardy, Esq.
FURRY FRIEND: Tahoe
"The Wonder Dog"

Tahoe, a standard poodle, has many jobs at the law office, such as being the official greeter when clients come in, and helping our mail person deliver the mail. Tahoe also checks in on every one of us throughout the day. He always lifts our employees' spirits. Sometimes Tahoe appears bored while listening to the phones ringing and folks dictating, but he remains patient, waiting for attention or a treat.

The lawyers and staff at Hardy Law Group would feel much more stressed if Tahoe didn't come to the office every day. Ultimately, he is just happy to be with all of us and his presence helps us keep our priorities in order.



If anyone in our office is indisposed, Tahoe is more than happy to fill in.

ATTORNEY: Amy Crowe, Esq.
FURRY FRIEND: Hobbes

On a blustery fall day over a decade ago, I made two decisions that continue to influence on my life: one, I decided to apply to law school; two, I decided to adopt an ornery, six-month old English Spot rabbit named Hobbes from a local shelter. Since that time, various shelter rabbits have adopted me and traveled with me along my chosen career path.



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Rabbits are very opinionated creatures, inclined to disapprove of the habits of their human servants. On the night before my first law school paper was due, Hobbes determined that I had spent too much time on the computer, painfully deliberating minor edits to the paper. Shortly before midnight, she chewed through the power cord on my laptop, informing me it was time to go bed. She also disapproved of power naps on the sofa, sitting on my head and staring at me until I woke. In this way, she saved me from blissfully sleeping through my property final exam.

Hobbes taught me many useful lessons that I carried with me into the practice of law. He and the other rabbits that have come into my life make me laugh with their giant ears and mischievous antics. And, as my current rabbit, Alex, runs off with a document I was trying to edit, I am reminded again that sometimes it is important to put work away and just enjoy life.

ATTORNEY: **Isabel Fleisher, Esq.** FURRY FRIENDS: **Buffy, Liberty and Justice**

After graduating from U.S.D. School of Law in California in 1978, I moved to Las Vegas, established my required residency and worked as a law clerk in a private firm and for one of the Eighth Judicial District judges. Immediately after passing the bar, I established myself as a sole practitioner and also served as “The Paternity Judge” on a part-time basis.

All members of the bar are familiar with the stresses connected with the legal profession. There were many times that I questioned whether or not justice could really be found in the courthouse. So... I acquired two precious, furry, four-legged companions. Both were rescued dogs. They provided that unconditional love that pets are so highly skilled at providing. No matter how difficult a day I experienced, when I returned home in the evening they greeted me with a happy face, a wagging tail and the excited expectation that I collapse on the sofa and spend some quality time with both of them.

The names I selected for them were Liberty and Justice. I always said that one could not necessarily find Liberty or Justice at the courthouse, but... I always knew they were waiting for me at home.

Both of those beloved dogs passed away many years ago after long lives. However, I now have a new dog with me.

This is Buffy:

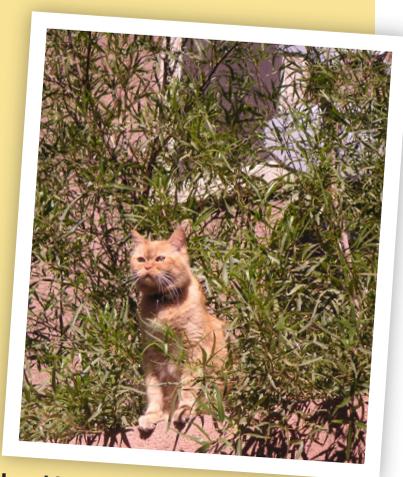


And YES... she is just as loving and as loved as Liberty and Justice were!

**A WORD FROM
THE CAT OF LINA
SAKALAUSKAS, ESQ.**

Hi, My name is Mashi Sakalauskas. I am green-eyed, orange tom cat. I am not sure when I was born but my human roommate tells me that I am approximately 7-years old. I was living as a stray cat and this lawyer lady took me in when I showed up at her house in 2004, tired and hungry. She fed me and took me to the vet and now I am a happy and healthy house cat. This lawyer lady's name is Lina Sakalauskas and she has worked for the State of Nevada as a worker's compensation attorney since 2005.

Lina tells me I'm her good luck charm, as she was laid off when I came to her and I supervised her job search by sitting on her computer and printer to motivate her. My efforts paid off; now she has a job and can support me in the manner to which I have become accustomed. I have the run of the house during the day when she is working and she tends to all my needs when she gets home.



In addition to his other duties, Mashi serves as a "guard cat" as he patrols the block wall surrounding Sakalauskas' house.



**ATTORNEY: D. Geno Menchetti, Esq.
FURRY FRIENDS: Deacon, Duchess,
Turk, Christie, Absolut, Et al.**



Menchetti's furry friends Buddy and Cashmere hard at work in the office.

I am a German shepherd guy. I had my first shepherd, whose name was Deacon, when I started law school at Mc George. Deacon was joined by Duchess (a puppy I found eating beer nuts in the Old Globe Saloon at the Ormsby House in Carson City) a few years later.

After they passed, I was fortunate enough to be joined by Turk and Christie (my only long-haired shepherd). That pair helped me open my first private

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practice, in Incline in 1979. They were followed by Absolut (an extremely intelligent and handsome rescue dog). “Lute” lived with me through my initial cancer diagnosis and treatment. He is memorialized by a statue that can be found inside of the Incline Village/Crystal Bay Visitors and Convention Bureau, as well as on a plaque with me at the Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival. Absolut was a big deal in Incline.

After Lute’s passing, and after my cancer recovery, I got Cashmere and, shortly thereafter, Buddy, both from German Shepherd Rescue of Northern California. These days you will find the three of us hiking (or snowshoeing in the winter) every morning up on Mt. Rose. If there are any German shepherds awaiting adoption at our local Pet Network Humane Society, they are invited to join us on our daily hikes.

ATTORNEY: Var Lordahl, Esq.
FURRY FRIENDS: Torte, Ned and Theo



My fiancé and I are both attorneys here in Las Vegas and dachshund afficianados.

These wonderful, oddly-shaped little hounds have shaped our transition from law students to lawyers, and our transition from Las Vegas outsiders to members of the local community.

A local dachshund hiking and adventure group provided a wonderful way for us to meet people and their dachshunds and to discover many of the wonderful hiking areas in Las Vegas. Through this group we also became involved with the fledgling On My Way Home Dachshund Rescue. I have since begun using my training as a tax attorney to form a nonprofit 501(c)(3) for the dachshund rescue (with the generous support of my firm, Jones Vargas).

It is difficult to take life, or ourselves, too seriously when we come home to three wonderful wiener dogs competing for our attention. We are getting married next month, thanks in no small part to our “kids,” who helped us weather the last few years with a sense of humor, a sense of community and a very special love for our young family of humans and hounds.



Zach Coughlin, Esq. and his Pekingese, Jackson Pawluck.

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Lara Pearson, Esq. refers to her cats, Wilson and Vinnie, as her “associates” because they hang out in her office, where she works from home, every day. Sometimes, she gives Wilson a pillow to lie on atop her desk, while she always has a chair pulled up to the desk to give them easy access (and another spot for napping).



ATTORNEY: Jeanne Lambertsen, Esq.
FURRY FRIENDS: Whitney, Bugsy, Stella, Et al.



Family Affair: left to right; Lambertsen, her sister Kathy Thomas and her mom Judy Thomas, with some of their whippets.

Studying at the William S. Boyd School of Law, stressing over the Nevada bar exam, handling harried supervising attorneys and hectic litigation deadlines plus having the mental reserve to soothe uncooperative clients have all been offset by my precious whippet dogs.

Whippets have been a part of my family since the 1970s, when I began traveling to AKC dog shows with my mom and sister. Needing a break from family law, in April 2010, I traveled with my mom to Tucson, Arizona for the American Whippet Club National Specialty. The previous October, mom had been diagnosed with breast cancer and had undergone a double mastectomy.

We had an awesome time in Tucson. My love and admiration for my 72-year-old mother grew even stronger as I watched her compete with her whippets and win the top awards of “high in trial obedience dog” and “high in trial rally dog,” just six months after her surgery; it was thrilling! She’s been my true inspiration for tackling tough legal work.



Lambertsen showing her whippet “Whitney,” more formally known as Ch. Cygnet Watch Me Ms. Whitney, CD, JC, ROMX.



Spike, a working dog, is the greeter at the firm of Nersesian & Sankiewicz. He makes his home with Bob Nersesian, Esq. and Thea Sankiewicz, Esq. (It’s okay; they are married!)



Local attorneys Robert E. Griffy, Esq. and Rebecca L. Burton, Esq. brought in Holmes and Watson, two old English Sheepdogs to solve The Case of the Missing Stress. The case was solved when it was discovered that the canine partners had chased the stress of working in a law firm away!

ATTORNEY: Scott McKenna, Esq.
FURRY FRIEND: Syd

In 2007, my wife and I decided we wanted to adopt a cat from the local shelter. We went intending to adopt one, but left with three more after we learned that the foursome had been rescued together from one of those “67 cats in a mobile home” situations. It was clear the cats knew each other (were possibly even siblings), and we saw no reason to increase their anxiety via separation.



Perhaps the most notable of the four was Syd. Syd was either wholly or partially of the “Foreign White” breed – similar to a Siamese in many respects, but pure white without color points. His left eye was blue and his right eye was amber/orange.

After having Syd at home for a few weeks, we came to the conclusion that, “Wow! He’s

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really loud!” As it turned out – and such is not uncommon for all-white animals – Syd was 100 percent hearing-impaired. We hadn’t realized this right away, because his ability to sense things, such as the vibration of footfalls, meant that he wasn’t often surprised by humans, even if he could not hear them. But, not being able to hear himself, Syd seemed to take the approach of, “I’m going to employ maximum volume every time.” It was a bit like having Pete Townshend show up to play in one’s living room, but bringing an amp and PA set-up appropriate for Wembley.

ATTORNEY: Kristine Brown, Esq.
FURRY FRIENDS: Dakota, Chico, Et al.



Chico the Chihuahua from the Central Valley

During the week, I do criminal defense work in Minden, Nevada. At night I come home to foster dogs. On the weekends, I go walk the dogs at Safe Haven: miles and hours of walking, during which the deepest thought we think is “Oh, the lizard ran under the bush.”

There is a saying in dog rescue: “Since rescuing dogs, I lost my mind, but found my soul.”



Brown and Dakota, a Native American Indian dog

I began volunteering at the Yerington Animal Shelter in 2005, after seeing the dogs in the trees in New Orleans after Katrina on television. After several years of volunteering, and taking home the next dog on the “euth,” the battle with bureaucracy became too much and some friends and I formed our own 501(c)(3), B.A.R.K. (Build a Rescue Kennel), which is now filled with dogs from all over the southwest.



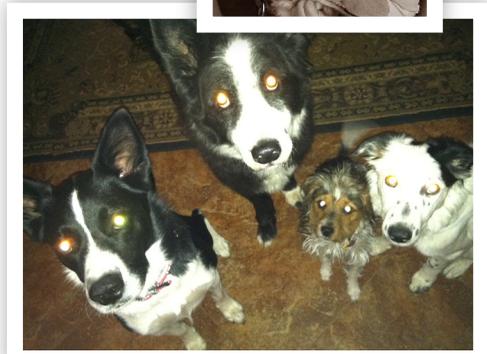
Al Marquis, Esq. and his aptly named parrot “Trouble.”

ATTORNEY: Yvette Chevalier, Esq.
FURRY FRIENDS: Buddy, KC, Lulu and Rico

In 1997, I acquired a six-week-old border collie who I named after my children Katrina and Carl: hence KC (his legal name on his registration is Prince KC the Bashful.). He has been an incredible partner in my life.

When KC was pup, I enrolled him in as many classes as I could afford. He was a high-energy, hyper border collie who was nothing less than insane about balls of any kind. I showed KC in AKC obedience and he won a few ribbons. KC was shown by a herding handler and got his sheep dog titles. We raced on a

Yvette and KC.



The whole doggie family.

flyball team for more than seven years and were members of now-Justice Kristina Pickering and Attorney Steve Morris’ Flying Colors Flyball Team for several of those years.

From my dog, KC, I have learned tenacity, focus, dedication, loyalty, kindness and zealous advocacy. Now, as KC prepares to exit into eternity, I will cherish his lessons with the hope of being half as good for my clients as he was for me, his master, friend and human mom.

While KC is still alive, he is teaching my young dogs Lulu (a Jack Russell Terrier) and Rico (a border collie pup) how to be dogs with a keen eye for their handler while embracing the joy of being active and legally bound to sports, learning, loyalty and guarding. Lulu has already made her first debut at the law office; she sat on L. Early Hawley’s lap and licked the client who was so tickled by the affection that he left Earl a nice retainer without a bit of hesitation. ■