



“One of the best things about choosing a career in the law is that, with few exceptions, your bar passage is a ticket to practice in any area in which you can become competent.”

Young Lawyers

BY JEREMY REICHENBERG, ESQ., YOUNG LAWYERS CHAIR

OH, SO MANY CHOICES: SELECTING THE PERFECT PRACTICE AREA FOR YOU

Most of us entered law school with a fairly good idea of what kind of lawyer we wanted to be when we graduated. Along the way, many law students got diverted from that original plan; it might have been due to their performance in a certain law school class, the realities of the current job market or even the crushing load of student loan debt. However, not having the job you always thought you'd have *today*, can't prevent you from laying the groundwork for a more rewarding career *tomorrow*.

When you look around the bar at the great lawyers in any practice area, they all have something in common with you: they graduated from law school and passed the bar with little to no experience in the area in which they now excel. One of the best things about choosing a career in the law is that, with few exceptions, your bar passage is a ticket to practice in any area in which you can become competent. So what can you do today to lay the groundwork for a rewarding practice in the future?

Create a Network

One of the best things about practicing in Nevada is that it is still a small, friendly legal community. If there is a practice area you would like to break into, there is most assuredly a section or group of attorneys who practice in that area. Get involved with any organization that can help you meet people who do what you want to do. I know many attorneys who are loath to associate with other lawyers; however, the reality is that you spend a great deal of your life and energy at work. That time will be much more enjoyable if your practice is spent in the company of friendly rivals and colleagues.

Additionally, one of the best ways to find out about another practice area is to talk to your friends who practice in that area. Sitting around telling war stories with friends isn't just entertaining, it is instructive. It is instructive on the collegiality of practitioners in that area, the pitfalls of the practice and the highpoints of success. If you sit in horror as you listen to your friends' tales of woe, ask yourself if that is really the practice area for you. Similarly, if their stories seem fun and exciting to you, these friends can be the first people you call on for tips and referrals when you change the focus of your practice.

Find a Mentor (or Two)

As they say, good artists copy, great artists steal. What better way to become a well-respected practitioner than to find a few great practitioners, pick their brains, listen to their ideas and then run with it? Inn of Court, the new Transitioning into Practice (TIP) program and other formal mentor organizations provide great opportunities for young lawyers to learn from seasoned practitioners. Take a chance and invite an established lawyer out to lunch or coffee, or try to catch them after a CLE or other speaking engagement. Every great lawyer started out exactly where you are now and most, if not all, are happy to pass along any help and advice they can provide. Find out how they started, what influences they had and what they would do differently if they had the chance. Learn what made the best practitioners "the best," decide which guideposts work for you and chart your course accordingly.

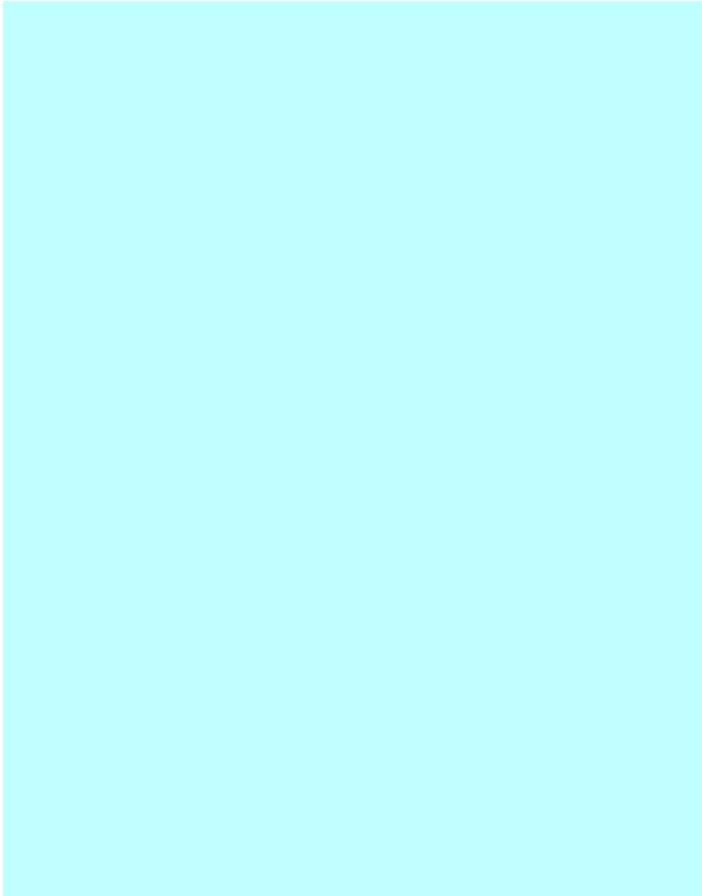
Wade into the Water

The only way to truly find out what will make you happy is to *do*. Many legal services organizations offer CLE classes where the price of admission is to take a pro bono case; many

even connect you with a mentor in that field. Or, if you have joined an organization for your target practice area, attend their CLEs, teach yourself the law, talk with your mentor and take a case. If you are waiting for your managing partner to give you the law practice and experience of your dreams, you may be waiting a while. It might be a bit premature to go out and get your own billboard, but be open with your supervisors about your desires to expand your practice area. Then go out and make it happen; most firms will appreciate your drive and enthusiasm.

Find Balance Now

Even the best intentions can be knocked askew by a house payment, car payment, student loan payment or the desire to take a much-needed vacation. That doesn't mean you can't get a great deal of satisfaction out of helping others through the work you are doing at your current job. By taking a few mindful steps, you can create your own opportunity to make a very real difference in your work life and the life of someone who needs your legal help. ■



November's Military List in Nevada Lawyer:

Don't be Left Out.

Nevada Lawyer's November issue coincides with Veterans' Day and the magazine editors would like take this opportunity, as in years past, to recognize State Bar of Nevada members with military backgrounds.



If you are a member of the State Bar of Nevada and serve or have served in the U.S. military, please send an e-mail to nvlawyer@nvbar.org.

Your e-mail should include:

- ★ Full Name as you would like it to appear;
- ★ Bar Number;
- ★ Branch of Service (Because of space limitations, we can include only branch per-person; it is best to list only the branch you most prefer to be affiliated with);
- ★ Let us know if you served as a JAG officer; and
- ★ **PHOTOS:** Send us high res digital shots of yourself in uniform, if you have them. Keep it fair; if you sent a photo last year, let someone else have the space this year.

The state bar does **not** keep records of military service, so we only know if you tell us. Please send us your information so that we can include your name in this special feature. The deadline is **September 14, 2012**. Please send us your information even if you have been included in past military issues!