

# DAY IN THE LIFE

CURATED BY PATRICIA D. CAFFERATA, ESQ.

## Law Clerk Spends Time Researching, Writing, Attending Oral Argument

BY HANNAH WINSTON, ESQ.

A “day in the life” can be very different for attorneys depending on the years an attorney has practiced and the type of law an attorney practices. As a new attorney, my days can be unpredictable, exciting and sometimes intimidating.

After graduating from McGeorge School of Law in 2017, I clerked for the Honorable Justice James Hardesty at the Nevada Supreme Court. My days as a law clerk were invaluable for my career as a practicing attorney. At the Nevada Supreme Court, I worked on a wide variety of cases, including those involving election law, foreclosures, child custody, statutory interpretation, criminal matters and other areas of law.

A law clerk’s duties can vary depending on the justice for whom the law clerk works. Most days of my clerkship were primarily spent researching, writing, re-writing and attending oral argument. One of the most challenging aspects of a judicial clerkship is transitioning focus to several different cases or legal issues each day. A law clerk’s job is to know every detail for the cases that the law clerk is assigned. Therefore, as emergency writ petitions are filed, oral arguments are held or the justice asks a specific question on one of the law clerk’s cases, the law clerk must be able to quickly transition from a current project to the case that needs attention.

Working at the Nevada Supreme Court strengthened my research and writing skills, but I also got to learn from an incredible role model and mentor. Justice Hardesty is a scholar and has high expectations for his law clerks, but he also spends time with his law clerks and leaves each with a sense of our moral and ethical obligations as attorneys. I am forever grateful for my experience at the Nevada Supreme Court, and I continue to remember those days now that I am a practicing attorney.

I am now an associate attorney at Robison, Sharp, Sullivan & Brust, and I primarily work in civil litigation. Some of my days as an associate attorney resemble those spent during my clerkship, as I still do a great deal of research and writing. However, being an associate attorney is much more unpredictable and entails much different responsibilities.

As an associate, I work on several cases with different partners at my firm, so I have several matters pending at any given time. Each day is unique, because different motions are filed all the time and issues frequently arise that need to be immediately addressed. I regularly appear in court, and I have



had the chance to travel to Las Vegas and California for court hearings. My workload has significantly increased at the firm, which took some adjusting but

is manageable—especially since I am now out of the first trimester of my pregnancy and have acclimated to the reduction in caffeine intake.

My favorite part of being an associate is strategizing with my colleagues about the best course of action in a case. It is a humbling and incredible opportunity to learn from attorneys with decades of experience, but it can also be intimidating, because I am still very new to the practice of law. The constant that has remained true since I began my career as an attorney is that I learn something new every day. I am fortunate to work at a law firm with great mentors and teachers. No matter how challenging a day in the life of an associate can be, I am lucky to be able to say that I love coming to work each day.

**HANNAH WINSTON** graduated from McGeorge School of Law in 2017 and started her career as a law clerk for the Honorable Justice James Hardesty at the Nevada Supreme Court. She is now an associate attorney at Robison, Sharp, Sullivan & Brust, practicing in civil litigation. She is licensed in Nevada and California.