

# DAY IN THE LIFE

CURATED BY PATRICIA D. CAFFERATA, ESQ.

## Day in the Life of a Law Clerk Transitioning to Remote Work

By Patricia D. Cafferata, Esq.

Since January 2019, I have been a law clerk in the Second Judicial District Court. I have come a long way since I clerked for Judge Dave Gamble in the Ninth Judicial District Court when I graduated from law school more than 30 years ago. I also clerked for Judge Connie Steinheimer 16 years ago and again last year. My current job includes clerking for Judge Steinheimer and advising Jackie Bryant, the court administrator, mostly by performing general counsel work.

When the COVID-19 virus started to rear its ugly head, the court began planning for employees to work from home, in the event the courthouses were closed. I was among the first employees to try working at home, thanks to modern technology and the cloud. My experience did not get off to a smooth start. My first attempt to log in to my court access was a disaster. Unbeknownst to me, my home computer was infected with malware.

As soon as I clicked to log in, a loud siren went off and a “Microsoft” page came up with the admonition to not turn my computer off and to call the number on the screen. I fell for it and called ... anything to get the screeching siren turned off. Without giving the blow-by-blow, “the nice man” who answered the phone said I’d been hacked and someone in Ohio had charged \$8,000 worth of pornography on my credit card. To resolve this hack, he said I just needed to buy some Target gift cards and charge them to my credit card. This purchase would prevent my credit card from having the pornography charge posted on my card. I spent the



morning trying to buy gift cards to solve the problem before I figured out it was a scam. Fortunately, I saved myself from losing any money. Needless to say, I am embarrassed that I was so gullible. Then, I spent the better part of the afternoon contacting my creditors and financial institutions to cancel my credit cards and arrange better security (new passwords) for my accounts.

When I went into work the next day, I announced I did not want to work from home. After thinking about it, I realized my attempt to work from home was a blessing in disguise. Clearly, malware was on my computer that my anti-virus program did not and could not block or detect. I would not have known about it, if I had not tried to work from home.

The next Monday, I was asked to work from home, so I emailed the documents I was working on to my personal e-mail address. I have been

working on two research projects with deadlines of May 1, 2020, and December 31, 2020, so I have had plenty of work to occupy my day while at home. As I write this, I just finished week two working from home; I spent most of my time reading numerous cases and writing two memoranda.

The long-distance work became a lot easier this week because I was able to get access to Thompson Reuters at home. My case law reading and my Shepard’s research is not only possible but quicker than looking in the books, as much as I like reading books.

As to the rest of my day, I have plenty of free time because I do not have to rush off to for a meeting, event or appointment. Before I came home, I was also directed to stay away from people and get out in the fresh air for daily walks. Along those lines, I carry my iPhone in my pocket and am able to calculate the number of steps I take and stairs I climb. Since my office is downstairs in my two-story condo, and my coffee pot is upstairs, I average at least 10 flights a day. I clock between one and two miles a day walking around my neighborhood. I am in better shape now than when I first came home.

Best of all, besides my informative legal reading, I am devouring books for pleasure and have finished three on Nevada history, my favorite subject. The isolation is not so bad with access to internet and e-mail. Technology also keeps me in touch with family, friends and colleagues. And, I know “this too shall pass.” Meanwhile, I’m enjoying work without any interruptions.

**PATRICIA D. CAFFERATA**, a member of the Nevada Lawyer Editorial Board, was elected to the Nevada Assembly (1980-1981), as State Treasurer (1983-1987), and District Attorney of Lander County (1995-1996).