Four Reasons Why It Truly Takes a Village to Become an Effective Lawyer

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Mary Harriet Moore

By Mary Harriet Moore on October 9, 2024

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Four Reasons Why It Truly Takes a Village to Become an Effective Lawyer

I have always been a fan of the age-old adage. "If you want to go somewhere fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together." It rings true in both my personal and professional lives and has become a guiding principle. While individual efforts can yield rapid progress, sustained and meaningful success often requires collaboration and collective effort.

I have been lucky enough to have been surrounded by multiple "villages" which have helped develop me into the person and lawyer I am today. I grew up in a large family – both my parents have eight brothers and sisters and I have over 40 cousins. Most of us live in Charleston, South Carolina, so our family always relied on each other, whether it be to organize holiday gatherings, carpooling to school, or anything else someone needed.

I was also always actively involved in team sports including basketball and volleyball. As teammates, we relied on each other both on and off the courts and pushed each other to be the best versions of ourselves.

Whether it was my large family or volleyball and basketball teams, I quickly realized that it takes a village – supportive mentors, dedicated coaches, and encouraging family members – playing pivotal roles in shaping and advancing my personal development.

The same is true for my professional development as a young lawyer. As I transitioned into my professional legal career, I wanted to mirror the communities and experiences I had both with my family and in sports. While the specific roles and individuals differ, the principle remains the same: a supportive network is essential for progress and success.

As I embarked on my legal career, I kept this in mind as I looked for potential firms. I wanted to work with a firm and group of people that valued collaboration and camaraderie. After my second year of law school, I was lucky enough to clerk with Rosen Hagood. I immediately felt that the firm valued building strong mentorships and relationships and working collaboratively on cases. I recently reached three years working at Rosen Hagood and during those three years, I have experienced a collaborative environment that has helped me develop

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tremendously as a lawyer and a person.

I know that my experience isn't unique. It's incredibly important for anyone beginning their legal career to find an environment that helps them learn and grow into the best lawyer they can be. Not only has finding the right support and mentorship helped me develop my lawyering skills, it's also helped me better serve my clients. This is one of the reasons why I've decided to become a mentor for a second-year law student this year. After seeing the impact that my "village" had on me and my development in only three years, I am more motivated than ever to help someone whose shoes I was in just a few years ago.

There are so many benefits to working in a collaborative environment like the one I've been so lucky to find, but here are a few that I have found to be most helpful when it comes to developing as a young lawyer and learning to advocate effectively for clients.

Four Benefits to Developing Your Community as a Young Lawyer

1. DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

The practice of law is inherently collaborative. You have to work with your clients, other attorneys and staff in your firm, and the other side to get the best outcome for your client. Collaboration brings together individuals with varied skills, experiences, and viewpoints. As a young lawyer, it allows you to learn from others' experiences of what strategies, techniques, or legal theories you can use to get the best results for your client.

2. SHARED RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Working as a team allows for the pooling of resources, whether its knowledge or experience. This collective approach can provide access to tools and expertise that might be beyond the reach of an individual. Additionally, as a young lawyer, the support and encouragement from colleagues can enhance your confidence to take on new experiences that you have not done before such as taking a particular deposition, arguing a complicated motion, or examining a witness for the first time.

3. LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS AND NETWORKING

Collaboration fosters the development of professional relationships and networks. Building a strong network can lead to new opportunities, mentorship, and career advancement. Relationships established through teamwork often result in lasting professional connections that can be valuable throughout one's career, especially as a young lawyer who is learning and dealing with new issues every day that a mentor or colleague may have already experienced. Having a mentor or colleague to run ideas, strategies, or questions by has been critically beneficial to my development as a lawyer and my ability to problem solve on behalf of my clients.

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4. LEARNING AND GROWTH

You can read the rest of the article in in the Fall 2024 edition of Primerus™ Lady Justice here.

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