

Get to Know

Samera Ludwig

Is being an attorney what you thought it would be? How are things different from what you imagined?

I wanted to be a lawyer since I was in elementary school. I was also the first in my family to become a lawyer. I did not have preconceived notions about what it was like except from what I saw on tv!

After becoming an attorney, what made you want to stay working as an attorney?

I really like what I do because it is not the same thing on any given day. **Being an attorney is being a writer, advocate, counselor, researcher, investigator, therapist, salesperson, manager** - so many hats depending upon what the project or task is. Because the roles, responsibilities, and expectations change as we advance in our career from a junior associate to a senior associate to a partner – at least for me, there was always something new to which I could aspire.

Also, I really believe in mentorship. Not necessarily a formal relationship, but those informal relationships in an office where you give advice and guidance to those who are junior. I have been blessed in my career with truly exceptional mentors who taught me how to write, instilled confidence, and provided me with opportunity. The fact that I can pay that forward and be accessible to anyone who wants to listen to me is a really good feeling.

What is your go-to piece of advice you have for upcoming associates?

Get as much experience as possible by doing different things and treat the partners you work with as clients. You want “repeat business.”

What has been the biggest difference between being an associate and being partner?

As a partner, you are more cognizant of the business aspect of being a lawyer. So, you think about – or should think about – how to be more profitable, efficient, strategic, generate business, etc. As an associate, you are more concerned – or should be more concerned - with being good at what you do and getting experience.

How have things changed in your practice area of law from when you started practicing to now?

Employment and immigration are areas of law that are not stagnant. There are annual updates, changes based on changes in the government and the party in power. Each state – some cities – have their own employment laws. Change in my areas of law is constant and I think that dynamic nature of employment and immigration keeps it new and exciting and impresses on me that our clients need to be made aware of the changes too.

What’s a story you’ve heard/witnessed during your tenure as an attorney that's always stuck with you?

One of my mentors once told me that when he moved from one law firm to another, he called a client with whom he worked at the prior firm – which was not his client – to let the client know of his move.

The client thanked him for getting in touch and then a few weeks later called him back and said, ‘listen so *and so* at the last firm just isn’t getting back to me at all and it is kind of urgent. Can you handle this case?’ Obviously, my mentor said yes and that is how he landed that client. Someone else was too busy to call a client back. This was the same mentor who required that any client calls and emails needed to be returned within two hours. It always amazes me the number of clients I talk to who thank me for being responsive and prompt. But that is part of our job.

What is your proudest moment?

When I graduated Columbia Law School. Being from an immigrant family from India, I was supposed to go to graduate school. But graduate school meant medicine. I was the first in my family to go to law school and the first lawyer in the family. I have two cousins of mine who are now also lawyers. I still remember my apprehension when I broke it to my parents that I was not going to med school.

What is the most important thing you took away from your time in law school?

The most important thing I took away from my time in law school is friendship. I met some really wonderful people – a few who are lifelong friends. It goes without saying but **it is really important to maintain relationships that are important to you.**

What are your hobbies/interests outside of law? How do those skills/interests help your practice?

My greatest passion is to cook and to cook for others. I find it therapeutic and giving. I typically cook 3 or 4 nights a week. If there is a stressful or difficult day at work, you can find me in my kitchen cooking an elaborate meal. I may be the only mom out there who isn’t looking for a quick 20 minute meal to make on a weeknight. I love that cooking is a time for me to unwind after work and also catch up with my daughters.

Samera Ludwig

Partner on the Labor and
Employment Team

