

Roger Williams University

DOCS@RWU

Life of the Law School (1993-)

Archives & Law School History

5-15-2021

Changemakers: Finding The Perfect Niche

Michael Bowden

Follow this and additional works at: https://docs.rwu.edu/law_archives_life



Part of the [Business Organizations Law Commons](#), [Labor and Employment Law Commons](#), [Legal Education Commons](#), [Legal Profession Commons](#), and the [Tax Law Commons](#)

CHANGEMAKERS

Finding the Perfect Niche

May 15, 2021
Michael Bowden



Dasha G. Brockmeyer '07 reached a career milestone this spring when she was elected partner at the 400-plus-attorney firm of Saul Ewing Arnstein & Lehr LLP, practicing mainly in the field of employee benefit law, where she helps businesses design, implement and administer their benefit plans.

Based in the firm's Pittsburgh office (Saul Ewing maintains 18 locations, stretching from Boston to Miami), Brockmeyer's workdays are rarely dull.

"Each day varies dramatically," she said. "At any given moment, I might be consulting with clients on administrative questions, advising them on tax and fiduciary considerations, or working on regulatory compliance." And her new partnership status has only enhanced the experience – "increasing my visibility both within the firm and with clients, and giving me an opportunity to work on a wider variety of projects."

It also marks the culmination of a personal journey that began at age ten, when Brockmeyer first arrived in Philadelphia with her family from St. Petersburg, Russia. After finishing high school,

she studied business at the University of Pittsburgh. But when her first jobs out of college fell short of expectations, Brockmeyer's thoughts turned to law school.

"We'd had a lot of visa and citizenship issues in my family," she recalled. "We didn't get our green cards until I was 17 years old. I remember going through that whole process, working with immigration attorneys and meeting a lot of other immigrants in need. So for me, the desire to go to law school was all about working for the little guy. I really wanted to assist individuals like my parents – and RWU Law seemed like a really good fit for my personality."

I am challenged every single day, handling different projects and issues. I really enjoy it. It's interesting. It's exactly the type of work that I want to be doing.

Once she got here, however, she discovered it was the more business-oriented classes that captured her attention. "The classes in Legal Writing, Corporate Law, Bankruptcy Law – and Tax Law, in particular – stirred my interest," Brockmeyer said. "And that is what eventually led me down my current career path."

When she graduated at the outset of the Great Recession, however, jobs were scarce.

"I was fortunate enough to secure a position at a small boutique firm specializing in employee benefits law," Brockmeyer said. "It is a very niche area; very heavily regulated. It requires great attention to detail in an ever-changing environment. I took the job partially because it's what I could find at the time – but also in part because companies seemed to be seeking out lawyers who knew how to do this work."

It turned out that Brockmeyer had a knack for it. In the years that followed, she secured corporate counsel positions with two Fortune 500 companies – first as a tax attorney at U.S. Steel, and later as Benefits and Compensation Counsel at Arconic. In between, she spent a few years as an associate at Saul Ewing. In 2019, she returned to the firm as counsel until being elevated to partner in 2021.

And though Immigration Law didn't turn out to be her legal specialty, Brockmeyer says her Russian background still influenced her legal trajectory.

"I am driven to very technical areas because I can interpret them well," she explained. "I tend to read things a bit differently, and I think this is perhaps because English was my second language. That's why I really liked my tax course at Roger Williams, for example, but it covers a much larger dynamic than just tax."

Brockmeyer also finds Saul Ewing's "large-midsize footprint" conducive to her work.

"In my area of law, you need other attorneys around you – to ask questions, to cooperate, to collaborate," she said. "Because, again, the work is just so detail-oriented that it's really valuable to work with attorneys who specialize in different areas that can relate to benefits – Labor Law, Corporate Law, Higher Education Law, Healthcare Law, Bankruptcy Law, Tax Law, and more. I

am challenged every single day, handling all these different projects and issues. I really enjoy it. It's interesting. It's exactly the type of work that I want to be doing."

And the future, as Brockmeyer sees it, will afford plenty of additional opportunities to improve her game.

"I plan on growing my practice, raising my profile at the firm, and continually expanding my knowledge in this area of law," Brockmeyer said. "Looking back, it was a great choice to attend RWU Law. The wide variety of classes provided me with the groundwork I needed to excel, and the professors and staff were all top-notch. They gave me their undivided attention and challenged me in ways that prepared me well for the future."