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Law School News: The Power of Yes: Stefanie Fischer L'24

3L Stefanie Fischer reflects on life, law school, and the path not taken

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Suzi Morales



Stefanie D. Fischer L'24 Image Credit: Justin Case

You might say Stefanie Fischer's success in law school started with sled dogs.

Fischer is a member of the Roger Williams University School of Law Class of 2024. As a teaching assistant for multiple courses and editor-in-chief of the *Roger Williams University Law Review*, she has excelled at every opportunity offered to her as a law student.

But she credits her accomplishments at least in part to one chance she didn't take.

Dogs and horses

After graduating from the George Washington University in three years, Fischer briefly considered law school but chose a more adventurous path. In 2011, she moved to Seward, Alaska to work for the Seavey family, a multi-generational dogsledding family that included two champions of the famous Iditarod sled race. She did everything from administrative assistance to mushing for the family's racing and tour company. After a few months, they offered to sponsor her for an Iditarod training team.

But Fischer's parents, concerned about the danger as well as the time commitment of around four years, talked her out of the Iditarod. A lifelong equestrian, she instead began training horses and giving riding lessons, eventually becoming the co-owner of her family's horse farm.

Far from settling for a fallback option, Fischer thrived. "I was the happiest person in the world as a horse trainer," she says. In 2019, she began leasing a horse farm in Rehoboth, Massachusetts. When the pandemic started, "my income completely stopped; my expenses didn't." Looking for a secure career path, she circled back to the idea of law school that she'd stepped away from a decade before.

"A lot of yesses"

Fischer applied only to RWU Law because she wanted to stay in state. In law school, she wanted to distinguish herself in a competitive career. She also had the Iditarod in the back of her mind and didn't want to say no to another chance.

"I didn't ever want to turn down an opportunity and regret it later. Part of that was that I was coming to this as a second or third career and at a much older age," Fischer says. "I really wanted to make sure that I put my all into it so I said lots of yesses to things and ended up getting super involved in lots and lots of things."

As a teaching assistant, Fischer enjoyed mentoring the students in her classes, who were around the same age as many of the riders she'd coached at her horse farms. She also appreciated the intellectual challenge. "I love the idea of the law being a puzzle and you having to figure out a system and a way to work the knowledge into a framework that you can understand and apply," she says.

Around the time she was preparing to go to law school in 2020, Fischer also started a master's program in psychology at Pepperdine University. She will graduate in June 2024. Studying psychology helped her manage a *Law Review* team of around sixty high achievers.

"It made me a much more empathetic person," Fischer says. "I was much more able to step back from something and say, 'Okay, what is this person thinking? What are they feeling like?' ... That sounds really simple, but it's really hard to do."

After graduation, Fischer will clerk for Chief Justice Paul Suttell of the Rhode Island Supreme Court. Eventually, she would like to work for a large law firm in the Boston area.

While she was working at the sled dog facility, Fischer bought her parents a Christmas ornament from the onsite gift shop. When she visits over the holidays, she often points out the ornament and gently teases them for dissuading her from the Iditarod.

While Fischer doesn't know what might've happened if she took a different path, she knows the power of saying yes. As she looks forward to embarking on her law career, that power will continue to propel her to new challenges.