

Roger Williams University

DOCS@RWU

Life of the Law School (1993-)

Archives & Law School History

10-2024

Law School News: From Ideas To Political Action 10-2024

Roger Williams University School of Law

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



Part of the [Election Law Commons](#), [Environmental Law Commons](#), [Law and Politics Commons](#), [Legal Education Commons](#), [Legal Profession Commons](#), [President/Executive Department Commons](#), and the [State and Local Government Law Commons](#)

LAW SCHOOL NEWS:

FROM IDEAS TO POLITICAL ACTION

Tolulope Kevin Olasanoye, RWU Law Class of 2012

[Juris Doctor](#)



Tolulope Kevin Olasanoye, L'12 - Executive Director of the Democratic Party of Georgia

For Kevin Olasanoye L'12, the belief in the government's ability to fundamentally create positive change for the people it serves is one of his core tenets. In fact, it's a belief that has shaped his career and led him to pursue a career in politics.

The Providence native has spent the better part of the last two decades in the political world. Starting as a staff assistant for Senator Jack Reed during his college days, Olasanoye has soared through the ranks. Last September, he was named to his biggest role yet: Executive Director of the Democratic Party of Georgia.

It can be grueling, traversing a battleground state in an election year trying to help candidates up and down the ballot. But for Olasanoye, he knows his hard work is crucial in helping future generations.

“In politics, I’ve learned you don’t get to do all those great things unless you have people who help candidates turn ideas into messages that resonate. Every two years or four years, you are asking people to trade you their vote for a basket of goodies in return—good schools, good roads, getting their trash picked up on time, lowering taxes, having walkable streets.

“People are willing to pay a high price for this basket of goodies as long as it meets their needs. I’ve devoted myself to trying to help people in the communities I grew up in and take ideas and turn them into policy. It’s about ensuring ordinary people have a voice in government and participate in the political process.”

For Olasanoye, no single work week looks the same. There are so many moving parts that he needs to oversee. From fundraising to communications to hiring staff, Olasanoye has to wear many hats. For instance, in June, Atlanta hosted CNN’s presidential debate. Olasanoye said that having the event in Georgia required a lot of coordination. It meant working with the White House, media partners, members of Congress, and surrogates, ensuring that everything operated smoothly and everyone was on the same page.

“A day or week in the life of being the Executive Director of a party in a battleground state varies,” Olasanoye says. “As a general matter, jokingly, I’m trying to get all cats to march in the parade while juggling knives and walking on hot coals. There are a million things flying at you all day while you are adjusting.”

In his role—especially in a presidential election year—Olasanoye faces a slew of challenges. He describes his job as being “the general of an all-volunteer army.” With that, he notes, comes with many perspectives on how things should be done.

“There’s a lot of different and divergent views on where we are going, how we get there, and what makes the most sense for us to be doing,” says Olasanoye. “You are trying to build consensus with so many divergent views and so many good ideas about the how. We agree on the what, but the how is where we have the most disagreement. Building real consensus can be the most challenging.”

Though overseeing the party of a state with 159 different counties is exhausting, Olasanoye has been thrilled in his role. He cites the intersection of law, politics, and policy as his favorite part of the job. Olasanoye doesn’t practice much law in his position, yet a number of legal issues come across his desk. For him, having a legal education provides him with the ability to effectively think and analyze these matters when they arise. The policy part of the job is something that Olasanoye truly enjoys, as it allows him the chance to take the great ideas that candidates have and turn them into law.

Additionally, Olasanoye has relished the opportunity to continuously learn about different aspects of civil life. He cited a recent trip to Savannah, which has the largest single-terminal container facility of its type on the continent. During this visit, he learned about the different environmental issues caused by the tankers that come in and out of the port, as well as the impact this has on the dolphin population. He says that experiences like this have been both educational and eye-opening and that the nature of his job allows him to have these meaningful experiences.

This isn't Olanoye's first time being in leadership of a state party. Prior to his current role, he was the Executive Director of both the Rhode Island Democratic Party and the New Jersey Democratic State Committee. Additionally, before taking the position in Georgia, Olanoye served as the National Political and Organizing Director for The Collective PAC. This organization is dedicated to addressing the under-representation of the Black community in elected offices. Under his leadership, The Collective PAC helped over 300 candidates win elections at various levels, raising more than \$25 million in support.

Ultimately, as he continues the grind in a presidential election year, Olanoye highlights that he finds support in his family.

"I'm blessed to have an incredible spouse and kids who support me every day," he says.

While the work often takes him away from home, Olanoye says that he remains committed to making a difference for future generations, as he knows the work he is doing today will impact the world his children will live in tomorrow.