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Law Firms and In-House Counsel Connect with Veterans at Career Fair

Veterans and military spouses may not take a traditional path to a career in the law, but they bring other strengths and skills that make them valuable hires, said Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe chairman Mitchell Zuklie.

"Grit, determination, relentlessness, a global perspective, leadership experience—and those are qualities that all of us as lawyers want to have," Zuklie said, speaking Friday evening at the first-ever legal career fair in Washington for veterans and military spouses.

Nearly 400 veterans and military spouses were signed up to meet with dozens of law firms, corporate legal departments and government agencies over the course of the weekend. During the kickoff event on Friday, Zuklie and other lawyers, several of whom were veterans, spoke about the challenges veterans and their spouses face breaking into the legal profession after they leave military service.

Orrick, the American Legion,



Panel Discussion titled "The Importance of Veteran Hiring in the Legal Profession," during the Veterans Career Fair, held at the Marriott Metro Center Hotel in Washington, D.C. on May 1, 2015. Pictured from left to right: Beth Frerking, Editor in Chief of The National Law Journal, Lt. General (Ret) Dana Chipman, Chief Counsel to the House Select Committee on Benghazi, Christina Guerola Sarchio, Partner at Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe, Christopher L. O'Dell, Managing Director and General Counsel at Morgan Stanley Investment Management, Bill Hayden, Senior Attorney at Microsoft Corporation, Peter G. Patterson, Managing Counsel at Toyota Legal One c/o Toyota Motor North America, Inc., and Benjamin F. Wilson, Managing Principal of Beveridge & Diamond.

Microsoft Corp., Morgan Stanley, Shearman & Sterling and the D.C. Diverse Partners Network sponsored the career fair. ALM Media,

which publishes The National Law Journal, was also a co-sponsor. NLJ editor-in-chief Beth Frerking moderated the panel on Friday.

Retired Lt. Gen. Dana Chipman, who became chief counsel to the House Select Committee on Benghazi after decades of military service, said servicemen and women going into private practice aren't always prepared to think about the business side of the law.

"The biggest lack I see in those of us who have transitioned from military service is simply just the lack of a business acumen that you may have developed when you're in a profit-loss enterprise. Most of us as judge advocates or as military officers ... haven't had to worry about cost issues," Chipman said.

Military spouses who move around to follow their husbands and wives in active service can have a hard time maintaining their practice, said Orrick partner Christina Guerola Sarchio, who is married to a lieutenant colonel now serving in the Army JAG Corps Reserves. Sarchio works with the Military Spouse JD Network, which is lobbying states to make it easier for military spouses to receive temporary bar licenses.

The panel members urged vet-

erans and military spouses to emphasize qualities they bring that other lawyers in the job market may not have.

A firm could teach business acumen, said Beveridge & Diamond managing principal Benjamin Wilson. He said he was looking for lawyers with "resilience"—an "unrelenting determination" that veterans had "in spades."

Wilson said focusing on veterans and military spouses during the hiring process made good business sense. Clients don't want to pay firms to train young lawyers, he said, so "identifying people who know the law, who are energetic, who are self starters, that is in our self-interest."

Sarchio said the veterans working at her firm were "high performers." She cited their diversity of experience dealing with different people—sometimes under stressful conditions—as a factor.

"They could take a case, they could talk to investigators, they could talk to the common man on the street if that's what we needed, or they could talk to the sophisticat-

ed business client to explain a complicated legal issue," Sarchio said.

Many lawyers who come out of military service have been trained to lead, which is experience that not all lawyers, especially young lawyers, have, said Christopher O'Dell, managing director and general counsel of Morgan Stanley Investment Management, who also served in the military.

District of Columbia Superior Court Judge Robert Rigsby, who served in the Army JAG Corps and temporarily left the bench in 2009 to deploy full-time as the sole U.S. military judge in Kuwait, Afghanistan and Iraq, said veterans must translate what they accomplished in the military into "civilian-speak." In the private sector, away from the structure of the military, "you have to sell yourself," Rigsby said.

Veterans bring work ethic, leadership skills and management experience, Rigsby said. "You are people that will get to yes, not to no."

Contact Zoe Tillman at ztillman@alm.com. On Twitter: [@zoetillman](https://twitter.com/zoetillman)



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www.veteranslegalcareerfair.com

veteranslcf@orrick.com