



A Dialogue Between Law Student Kasama Star (left) and WCBA President Wendy Marie Weathers, Esq.

Kasama: What kind of law do you practice?

Wendy: I do foreclosure defense and bankruptcy law.

Kasama: How did you become involved in this type of law?

Wendy: You kind of fall into these types of things. Growing up, I had always wanted to be a doctor. I have always volunteered in the medical field. I was a candy striper for six years and served as an EMT during college and beyond. After Organic Chemistry, I realized maybe a medical career was not what I wanted to do. While at law school, I thought I would do health law. I thought, how can I combine both law and medicine.

Kasama: I can tell this is going to be a good story, tell me about your internships while at law school.

Wendy: The first summer after law school, I interned at the Attorney General’s office. I drove from Poughkeepsie to Albany each day because I couldn’t afford to get an apartment. It was a two-hour commute each way. I was paid \$125 per week. I enjoyed that internship; it was in the Consumer Fraud Bureau. I learned a lot and enjoyed the camaraderie of our class of 20.

Kasama: What about your other internships?

Wendy: I interned for the office of the Chief Medical Examiner. That was an amazing experience as well. The General Counsel went on a vacation for two weeks. I sat at her desk my second year of law school. I also interned for the

NYC Health and Hospital Corporation. That was mainly a desk job, doing things like contract review. I realized that I didn’t want to do that.

In my third year of law school, in the last semester, as I was looking at my resume, I realized that I had experience in government and the private sector. What I wanted now was experience with a judge. I saw an ad in the career center for a criminal court judge in Kew Gardens, Queens. I drove over there and had an interview with the Honorable Charles Posner. He hired me on the spot. It was amazing. I would do night court with him. I would sit on the bench with him and go through the rap sheet. He would ask, “What would you do in this case?” He really mentored me. He let me write a decision. He reached out to the New York Law Journal to get it published. It did and I still have a copy of the article framed on my wall in my office.

He was such a mentor to me. I fell in love with being in court. He said to me that I should consider the DA’s office. So, I had an interview with the Brooklyn’s DA’s office, and they hired me. Sometimes you think you have this whole thing planned out...but happenstance...Originally, I wanted “judge” experience. I wasn’t thinking that I was going to get a job from working for a judge.

Kasama: What happened in the Brooklyn DA’s Office?

Wendy: I moved up fairly quickly in the Brooklyn DA’s office. I was promoted to the Domestic Violence Bureau. I

got my own office, the only one in our class of 100. I was the point person for victims of domestic violence. They wore pendants around their necks, when they pushed the button, my beeper would go off. I would get calls at 2am; I would have to call the precinct/jurisdiction that they were in to get the police to go over there to make sure that they were safe. I had a lot of other great experience, like trial experience. I also had a lot of experience empathizing with youth who did not have the same opportunities as I did. It was heartbreaking, that gave me the drive to always reach out and help.

Kasama: You’ve touched on this already, but tell me more about your volunteer work.

Wendy: I have always pursued public service and volunteer work. Currently, I serve as the President of the Westchester County Bar Association (WCBA). I started a program, the Community Recovery Task Force, which has two components. One component (The Advance Directives for First Responders Program) helps train first responders on things like power of attorney, health care proxy, etc. The other part of the program is the Economic Recovery Program. We help people on topics like what happens if you’re furloughed, information about PPE, PPP, small business loans, etc. There is more information on our website about this program. See Community Recovery Task Force at wcbany.org.

Kasama: Wendy, I’m so impressed with your success, resourcefulness, and

volunteerism. So how did you get into foreclosure and bankruptcy law?

Wendy: It was hard to make ends meet on a government salary, so I accepted an offer with a foreclosure and bankruptcy firm two years after working for the Brooklyn DA's office. I've been practicing foreclosure and bankruptcy law for more than twenty years.

Kasama: What advice do you have for law students?

Wendy: I have three pieces of advice, the first is that it is important to have mentors. Find one or two people who really care about you getting the right experience and being there and available for questions. I wouldn't be where I am today without having those certain people in my life and guiding me. The old adage is believing in you before believing in yourself—we are our own worst critic.

The second piece of advice is to show up and work really hard. I am a hard worker; I might not be the smartest, but I am always the hardest worker.

The third piece of advice is to take

advantage of all the experiences and opportunities available. While I was in school, I worked, and I aimed to have different experiences to learn from. I was always juggling and balancing. I would attend CLE's as a student and network with attorneys. Take advantage of what the Bar Association can do for you and what you can do for the Bar. Put your name out there and network. Don't be afraid; get involved!

Kasama: I can attest to benefiting from a Westchester County Bar Association event. I attended "Meet the Judges" in the fall. I made meaningful connections, met with attorneys and judges.

What has changed for you during the pandemic?

Wendy: It's really bizarre, there is a silver lining that came out of this. On one hand, there is so much sadness, with people getting sick, losing lives, jobs, etc. But now that we are remote, I am able to do more. I used to spend about four hours a day on the road. I had to drive from Peekskill to Islip, to NYC, to Brooklyn, to Bridgeport, etc.

With the extra time that I gained, I am more efficient. I devoted much of this time to the Westchester County Bar Association. It helped me balance my full-time job as a foreclosure defense and consumer bankruptcy lawyer, my full-time commitment to the WCBA, and being the proud single mom of two teenage girls.

Kasama: Wendy, you are always busy and engaged. What is your next move?

Wendy: I have been given a tremendous opportunity to partner at an established firm in White Plains. One of the owners is retiring and he has asked me to join his practice, and to build it up and honor his legacy. It is a firm that focuses in foreclosure defense, consumer bankruptcy, landlord/tenant and real estate transactions. We launch January 1, 2021!

Kasama: Wow, congratulations, Wendy. I wish you every success; you will achieve success and you deserve it.

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