

# Is there a lawyer in the house?



**FOLLOWING  
THE PATH**

**TO CORPORATE  
COUNSEL**

*by Michele  
Wojciechowski*

When Veta T. Richardson graduated from the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law in 1986, she was the only one from her class who began working immediately as in-house corporate counsel. “That path was extremely unusual at the time,” says Richardson, the President and CEO of the Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC), a global organization based in Washington, D.C. Richardson knew early in life that she wanted to attend law school and then do transactional work for a Fortune 500 company. “That was my goal,” she says.

However, that was not the typical way of doing things. “The path had consistently been to graduate from law school, go to a larger law firm, and then move in-house. That’s how the majority of people found their in-house positions,” explains Richardson. A summer internship at Sunoco—where Richardson offered to work for free because the paid ones were filled—led to her first in-house counsel position.

“

**THE PATH HAD CONSISTENTLY BEEN TO GRADUATE FROM LAW SCHOOL, GO TO A LARGER FIRM, AND THEN MOVE IN-HOUSE. THAT’S HOW THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE FOUND THEIR IN-HOUSE POSITIONS.**

— Veta T. Richardson ’86

Christine Edwards ’83 also found herself on the road less traveled. Edwards, the chair of Winston & Strawn’s bank regulatory practice, landed her first corporate counsel position while she was still in law school. She was interested in a position in Sears’ government relations group, but despite her qualifications and company knowledge, she was not yet an attorney at the time of the interview.

In a 2012 interview with Law.com, Edwards explained that she told the vice president of

government relations, “Here’s what we can agree to. I’ll finish law school in two years, take the bar exam, and if for some reason I don’t pass, you can fire me.” They took her up on the challenge, and the rest was history. Edwards went on to spend nearly 30 years with Morgan Stanley, the last 10 years as chief legal officer. Her unique path included her achieving the distinction as the first woman general counsel on Wall Street.



The path for Darah McCray Okeke ’07, Senior Employment Counsel at Uber Technologies, Inc. in San Francisco, California, was more typical. While in law school, Okeke worked as a summer associate for a 200+ attorney regional firm. After graduating, she became a first-year associate in the firm’s Labor & Employment practice group, where she stayed for nearly seven years. At just more than a year away from partnership, Okeke knew that route wasn’t for her. “My passions, strengths, and goals more closely aligned with a career as in-house counsel and ultimately an executive leader,” she explains.

Her next position was as Vice President, Legal Counsel at a leading management company for retirement communities. While Okeke really enjoyed her first in-house opportunity and introduction to executive leadership, after three years she was open to a change. “I was ready for an exciting, new challenge and the chance to really flex my in-house muscle in an emerging industry where I could focus more specifically on the workplace equity issues that interested me,” says Okeke. That position was at Uber.

Megan M. Arthur '86, Senior Vice President and General Counsel for the University of Maryland Medical System Corporation, went the traditional route as well with a position at Venable, first in labor and employment and then in corporate health care. Her next job was at an HMO owned by CareFirst, then she worked for Magellan Health Services for a decade before moving to her current job in 2004.

"If you want to be a general counsel, I think it is important to be exposed to the various legal issues facing the company, not those in your particular specialty. The general counsel is really a jack of all trades," Arthur explains. "You need to be conversant in many areas of law—not an expert—but proficient enough to guide the business leaders through the legal thicket."

#### Why the Change?

This newer trend—to go directly from law school to an in-house counsel entry-level position—is gradually growing. According to a 2018 survey conducted by the ACC, of the 5,000 respondents from 60 countries worldwide, 15 percent went directly from law school to working as in-house counsel.

"Had we done this survey 10 years ago, I'm confident that number would've been substantially lower," says Richardson.

One reason for the change is simply the evolution of the world and the evolution of business strategies along with it. "Traditionally, companies have desired attorneys with years of legal experience, particularly at large law firms," says Okeke. "[But now] more and more companies—namely startups and tech companies—are balking tradition and opting to hire junior lawyers as corporate counsel to develop their own legal experts with historical insider knowledge, manage major projects and initiatives, and/or reduce outside counsel spending."

Programs such as Maryland Carey Law's Business Fellowship Program address this need and nurture in-house experiences for aspiring lawyers. "These new in-house opportunities are growing at a rapid rate, and it's critical for candidates, especially

junior lawyers, to get as much practical experience as possible—all the more reason the trend of corporate legal fellowship programs is a great one that will likely continue," Okeke said.

"As Business Fellows, students get a chance to delve into areas of law and a range of business issues that are new to them," says Dana Morris, Assistant Dean for Career Development at Maryland Carey Law. The experience is also unique because, Morris explains, they work closely with highly experienced business attorneys and executives who direct the corporate enterprise. "Without that kind of exposure and mentorship, fellows would not otherwise be able to gain such a deep experience in such short time."

#### Fellowships: The Give and Take

Affording Fellows this invaluable experience would not be possible without the support of Maryland Carey Law's alumni and friends. At the outset of Maryland Carey Law's Business Fellowship Program in 2015, Edward Shumsky '73, a member of the Board of Visitors, and his wife, Sue Kronick, quickly embraced the importance of the program. "Their leadership, expertise, and financial support allowed us to craft a program that met the educational needs of our students, while diversifying our access to career offerings," Donald B. Tobin, dean at Maryland Carey Law, remarked. The endowed Shumsky-Kronick Fellowship supports a Summer Fellow each year. Additional early supporters include William J. Pittler '59 and The Honorable Robert McGowan '84 and his wife, Lydia McGowan.

There are two types of Business Fellowships: Summer Fellowships for rising 3L students, during which they work with employers for 10 weeks, gaining necessary skills for corporate work, and Postgraduate Fellowships for new alumni who work with employers for a year after graduation. Like judicial clerkships, companies that employ Postgraduate Fellows are not required to hire them after the conclusion of the Fellowship. But since the program began just three years ago, many of them have.

One such graduate is Skylar Ludwick '16. In August of that year, she began her Fellowship at Brown Advisory (after having completed a Summer Fellowship at T. Rowe Price in 2015). In April 2017, she was offered a full-time position at the company. She accepted and is now Associate Counsel. "I was honored," she says of getting the job. Speaking of her Fellowship, Ludwick says, "The scope of the work that I was exposed to right



out of school is something that you'd be hard-pressed to find anywhere else during the first year of a legal career. Working as part of a business, you are experiencing something different every single day."

Brett Rogers '02, General Counsel of Brown Advisory, states that the company accepts a single year-long Fellow each year—after a rigorous screening and interview process. "Business Law Fellows at Brown Advisory are able to spend a year working in a dynamic, challenging environment learning how in-house attorneys support a rapidly growing investment firm. Fellows participate in the work our legal team performs by keeping the firm compliant with myriad regulations, providing legal advice to the business, helping to reduce risk, and keeping our clients well informed and protected. Across the firm, we work with nearly 600 colleagues in eight offices in the United States and the UK and manage nearly \$70 billion in client assets. It's an environment that affords attorneys the opportunity to solve complex challenges, experience a wide variety of legal and non-legal matters, and have tangible, positive impact through their efforts," Rogers explains. "Graduates' work product goes into use, not a filing cabinet."

At Brown Advisory, Fellows are treated like full-time employees from the beginning. Rogers



in-house counsel requires flexibility, creativity, and the ability to work with a variety of teams and personalities. This experience helps graduates get enough exposure to determine whether they enjoy that type of role, and if so, how to position themselves for their next career step after Fellowship—whether at Brown Advisory or elsewhere."

Marissa Johnson '17, also worked as a Fellow for a year at Brown Advisory and recently accepted a position as Associate Counsel. "These Fellowships are so important because many recent law graduates need hands-on, entry-level training that many firms do not see the value in providing. There is a gap in the job market that ignores those who are eager and willing to put in the time to learn, but not many are willing to teach them. These Fellowships fill that gap and provide a solid foundation for new attorneys to build upon," Johnson says.

Darrell Braman '88, Vice President and Managing Counsel of the legal department for T. Rowe Price Associates, Inc., has worked with a number of Fellows and says that it's refreshing to talk with younger law students and get their perspectives. As for the Fellows' benefits, he says, "In some programs like ours, they move around into various practice groups within the legal department and get a variety of experiences, whether it be working on intellectual property issues, regulatory issues involving mutual funds, litigation matters, or other areas typical of a global financial services firm." Braman adds that having T. Rowe Price on a resume early in the Fellows' careers can open doors for them during their job searches.

For Courtney Kuhn '17, in-house counsel with JKH Properties, LLC, her Summer Fellowship at T. Rowe Price was invaluable because she was exposed to experiences that she otherwise wouldn't have had until she had worked as a lawyer for years. "I worked with brilliant people while working on securities and compliance policies. I learned how attorneys negotiate with big banks and large clients," says Kuhn. "It's important to give students

“

**AS BUSINESS FELLOWS, STUDENTS GET A CHANCE TO DELVE INTO AREAS OF LAW & A RANGE OF BUSINESS ISSUES THAT ARE NEW TO THEM.**

— Dean Dana Morris

admits that there's a steep learning curve, but the payoff is worth it. "Graduates gain exposure to the universe of investment adviser regulation—an area of law that rarely receives more than cursory attention in law school—and how it is applied practically, in a firm with a variety of client types, investment strategies, and ways of delivering strategic advice," he says. "Working as

an opportunity to be exposed to business law.”

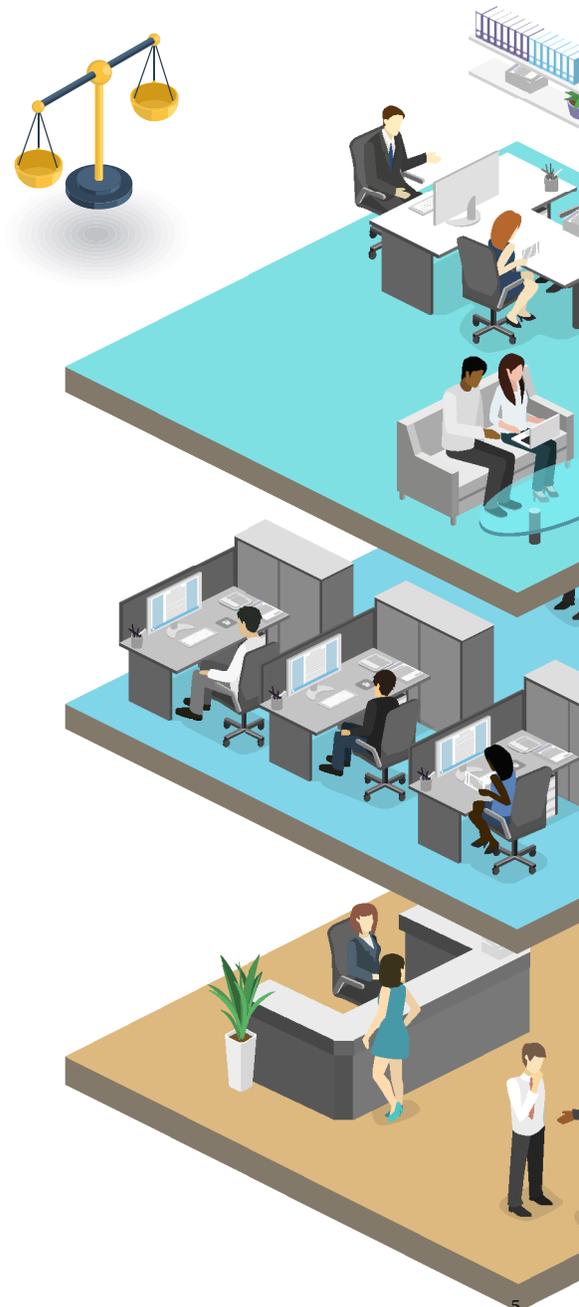
In 2017, Qingqing Wu '18, held a Summer Fellowship at T. Rowe Price and enjoyed it so much that she applied for—and received—a Postgraduate Fellowship for 2018-19. “I have a strong interest in cross-border transactions and international business law, so I’m thrilled to be able to work at the international law division. I am fluent in Mandarin Chinese, so I also hope to use my language skills when I work with T. Rowe Price’s legal teams in Asia,” Wu says.

Although T. Rowe Price does not typically hire recent graduates, Braman says that with over 200 legal department associates worldwide, “we could actually hire an intern coming out of this program if there’s an opportunity in the future.” For example, someone like Wu, who can also speak Mandarin Chinese, could eventually work in one of their Asia offices.

“  
[THE FELLOWS] HAVE  
AN OPPORTUNITY  
TO SEE HOW A  
CORPORATE LEGAL  
DEPARTMENT  
WORKS, AND THEY  
RECEIVE DAILY  
GUIDANCE ON HOW  
TO ACTUALLY BE AN  
ATTORNEY.

— Megan M. Arthur '86

Regarding the Fellowships, one thing is clear: They benefit both the Fellows, and the employers in ways neither could have imagined. “The corporation benefits from talented, innovative [Fellows]. They bring a lot of energy and enthusiasm,” says Arthur, who is working with her fourth Fellow from the program. As for the Fellows, they are afforded the opportunity to embark on the path to corporate counsel and nurture their budding legal careers. “They have an opportunity to see how a corporate legal department works, and they receive daily guidance on how to actually be an attorney.” ■



# The Intellectual Property and Entrepreneurship Clinic Partnership

BY LAURA LEE

In April 2018, the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law Intellectual Property and Entrepreneurship Clinic (IPEC) proudly announced its partnership with five prominent law firms. The partnership will foster experiential learning opportunities for future IP and corporate lawyers, as well as help drive economic growth in the Baltimore/Washington area. Baker Donelson, Gordon Feinblatt, Offit Kurman, Perkins Coie, and Womble Bond Dickinson have aligned with Maryland Carey Law to mentor law students as they develop IP and corporate law experience, and will provide guidance and advice to law students and their IPEC clients.

With the generous support of the IPEC partner firms, in addition to funding supplied by UM Ventures, Maryland Carey Law students will provide intellectual property and business law assistance to emerging companies and small businesses in both the College Park and Baltimore areas. In Baltimore, IPEC offers services out of the Graduate Research Innovation District (the Grid) in the newly renovated Lion Brothers Building.

Maryland Carey Law students will have the benefit of the expertise and support of partner attorneys working in various areas of business and IP law, but they are not the only ones who benefit. The five participating firms will have the opportunity to form relationships with startups and young lawyers. "Meeting law students while they're still in school and getting exposure to these young businesses while they're setting up their companies and making intellectual property and business decisions is incredibly valuable," said Professor Patricia Campbell, faculty director of IPEC. The partner firms will also serve on an Advisory Board for the law school's IP Program and will provide occasional presentations and educational programming for startup companies and entrepreneurs.

"We're thrilled these five firms are joining forces with our IPEC to help ensure the sustainability of the program and maximize the positive impact it will have on the region's efforts around innovation and entrepreneurship," said Dean Donald Tobin. "Helping businesses succeed will increase jobs and create opportunities for worker training and employment in new and emerging business sectors." ■

