

## An Interview With Jessie M. Reniere, Esq.

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Focus on the Future is a spotlight series where members of the *Rhode Island Bar Journal* Editorial Board interview attorneys who are newer to the Rhode Island Bar.

> **What is your current title and position?**

I am an associate in the Corporate and Business Group at Hinckley Allen.

> **What do you actually do all day?**

This is hard to answer because my practice is varied, but the majority of the work I do is in mergers and acquisitions. I represent buyers and sellers of companies, conducting due diligence on the target company, drafting and reviewing disclosure schedules and other transaction documents, and tracking the status of deliverables to make sure we're on schedule for closing. I've also worked on public finance and venture capital transactions, and lately, I've been doing a lot of commercial contract review and negotiation. Everything I do is transactional – I don't work on any litigation matters.

> **How do you think COVID and remote work has impacted the start of your legal career?**

It's actually hard for me to say because I don't really know what it would have been like otherwise. I was only in the office for about six months before we started working from home. I'm really glad, though, that I was able to meet people in person from all of Hinckley Allen's different offices when I was a summer associate and then during those first six months as an associate. That made it easier to send an email or pick up the phone to ask for help when I couldn't stop by people's offices anymore. The senior associates in my group were also extremely supportive – I think they were all more aware than I was of the challenges I was facing.

> **Can you tell us one thing you have learned while being a new attorney?**

One thing I've learned as a new attorney is to get comfortable being uncomfortable. When I first started, I was anxious about my lack of experience and felt like I didn't know how to do anything. Then, as soon as I felt comfortable doing something, I'd be asked to do something more advanced and I was back to square one! I've had to learn to trust my ability to pick things up on the fly. It's actually one of the reasons I love being a lawyer – I like the challenge of learning something new every day.

> **We have done a few of these interviews now and several of the new attorneys we have talked to mention the value of having a good reputation, even early on in your legal career. Have you thought much about this issue?**

I really value having a reputation as someone who is easy to work with. I make it a point to establish that reputation not just with clients and my colleagues at the firm, but with the attorneys and advisors on the other side too. While there are definitely times that negotiations are tense and the situation calls for me to be assertive, my view is that we're all working toward the common goal of closing the deal. I've been able to get more done for my clients by working to establish myself as someone who is

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JESSIE M. RENIERE, ESQ.

reasonable, flexible, and respectful. I'm always really glad when both sides share closing congratulations, say how great it's been to work with each other, and mean it.

> **Who is your biggest inspiration inside or outside of law?**

My biggest inspiration is my mom, May, who passed away just before I graduated from law school. She was, and still is, the smartest person I've ever known. When I told her the thesis of my law review comment, which had already been selected for publication, she picked apart my whole policy argument to the point where I was actually questioning it myself! She was also very independent. She grew up in Hilo, Hawaii, and then came to Rhode Island to go to Brown University. I don't think she had ever been to the mainland before, but she insisted that she wanted to go to a school on the East Coast. She was so far away from her family and there were significant cultural differences for her here, but she stayed in Rhode Island for another 30 years before moving back to Hawaii.

She was a great role model for me as a working mom – when I was a baby, my dad stayed home with me while my mom was establishing her career as a research and strategy consultant. Later, after they



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were divorced, she even started a small business with my dad while still working in consulting. My dad still owns and runs that business, Ray's Hockey, 24 years later.

My mom was also very passionate about her volunteer work at The UCAP School, which is a middle school for students from Providence, Cranston, and Central Falls who are at risk for dropping out of high school. She loved getting to know the students and helping them get back up to their grade level.

> **What do you do to de-stress?**

I take Japanese lessons once a week with a tutor, which I really enjoy. My grandmother speaks limited English and so I've always wanted to learn Japanese to better communicate with her. I also enjoy baking, yoga, and this past summer I started learning to play golf.

> **How do you feel about the Great British Baking Show?**

I absolutely love it! I wish I could bake like the contestants. I love their creativity and I am so impressed with their technical skills, especially when they don't have a recipe. I was so happy when Giuseppe won the last season.

> **What is your favorite restaurant in Rhode Island?**

Greenwich Bay Oyster Bar in East Greenwich is one of my favorites. It's really small and they have great food. I especially love their raw bar.

> **Name one thing that you could not live without and why?**

My dog, Cammy. She is from Mississippi and I adopted her through Friends of Homeless Animals Rhode Island when I first started at Hinckley Allen. I've always thought she sort of looks like Snoopy. She likes to make the occasional appearance on video calls and she provides excellent moral support when things are stressful!

> **According to your firm's website, you worked in Government Relations at IGT where you managed compliance matters including global anti-corruption, lobbying, campaign finance, and ethics. Can you tell us a little bit about your part in the fight against global anti-corruption?**

Global anti-corruption law is a huge interest of mine. At IGT, I worked with in-house counsel to ensure that the company's global government relations activities were in compliance with the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and similar statutes, as well as company policy. During law school, I took a class on anti-corruption law and wrote my law review comment about it. I also had the chance to work on global anti-corruption matters as a Corporate Counsel Extern at Textron.

> **How have you chosen to decorate your office?**

My uncle, David Reniere, is an artist so I have one of his paintings framed in my office. I also have a whiteboard, which I use to make to-do lists and organize my thoughts. I like using brightly colored whiteboard markers to color code things—there is something very satisfying about color-coding!

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