

An Interview With Koye Idowu, Esq.

by Nicole P. Dyszlewski, Esq., MLIS and Meghan L. Hopkins, Esq.

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 Counsel at ESPN.

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

I support certain business units within ESPN, including music, sales & marketing, business development, and travel. I also handle legal matters related to certain sports and leagues such as Little League baseball, professional softball, and bowling. My work is contract-focused, but it touches many areas within ESPN.

> **Prior to your position at ESPN, when you lived in NY, did you have any celebrity sightings you want to tell us about?**

Unfortunately, no. I saw a bunch of filming on location but no celebrity encounters during my time in NY.

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

I have learned the importance of building a collaborative relationship and maintaining open lines of communication with clients. The best attorney-client relationships often arise from clients viewing attorneys as trusted, business-minded confidants working towards their goals rather than obstacles who slow things down. Building that relationship takes time, and it's important to demonstrate to clients that we appreciate the need to keep the process moving forward while also identifying and addressing potential risks associated with taking certain actions.

> **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 yet?**

Absolutely. I started building my reputation in the legal community during law school when I served as an intern at the United States District Court for the District of Rhode Island and as a summer associate at a global law firm in New York. During those opportunities, I sought to demonstrate professionalism, build trust, and make the lives of my supervisors easier by asking pertinent questions and taking ownership of my work assignments. I think building your reputation starts with establishing a strong support system so you can lean on your mentors in moments of uncertainty. For that reason, I make an effort to meet other professionals in my industry to learn about their career paths, and I try to share my knowledge and experience with new attorneys entering the workforce.

> **How has it been integrating into a new job in an all remote or mostly remote post-pandemic world? How have the mentorship and communication been?**

It's certainly been an adjustment, but it's pushed me to actively seek



KOYE IDOWU, ESQ.

professional connections with people that I might not have crossed paths with otherwise, which is great. In the remote world, we've lost the casual conversations that occur while walking into the building, stopping into someone's office, or getting lunch, so you have to make them happen. For me, that's been reaching out to people and setting up 30-minute Zoom introductions or establishing monthly catch-up meetings with mentors. While scheduling set times to replace the organic in-person conversations takes a bit more forethought, I think it has definitely expedited my integration and opened lines of communication.

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

Steph Curry. I admire the way he carries himself and the joy with which he plays basketball. He displays a level of confidence that inspires others to follow his lead and simultaneously shows respect for everyone that he encounters. That way of being is admirable and can be applied beyond sports and law to life in general.

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

I go to the gym. I get up at 4 AM and workout from 5-7 AM. Knowing that I have that time to myself each day to



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unwind and rest my mind is huge for me. I also listen to podcasts daily. My favorites are *The Ryan Russillo* podcast, *The Joe Budden* podcast, *Higher Learning* with Van Lathan and Rachel Lindsay, *Brian Windhorst & The Hoop Collective*, *New Rory & MAL*, and *Small Talk* with Michelle Smallmon, and Steve Ceruti.

> **Snooze button or nah?**

Nope. And no coffee either.

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

Nino's Pizza in Cranston. It reminds me of my childhood!

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

Peanut butter. I have it every day.

> **You haven't really established your new office yet. How will you decorate your office?**

The décor will be sports themed and definitely will include some Steph Curry memorabilia and items from my favorite sports teams (Red Sox, Patriots, and Celtics). There will be pictures of my girlfriend and I, and I will also have some music-themed décor mixed in there like my Chance the Rapper "Coloring Book" poster.

> **What do you want attorneys to know about being in-house counsel?**

It is hard to say because I'm still learning myself. From the perspective of a firm attorney, it may look like being in-house counsel is less onerous because there is only one client. However, this job presents its own unique challenges. Despite the perception that in-house counsel only have one client, we all have multiple clients within the various business units that we support with unpredictable schedules and deadlines. One very different aspect of life as in-house counsel is that, unlike the law firm model of specializing in a particular area of the law, I'm able to experience various areas of law, which has afforded me the opportunity to develop a broader set of skills. I frequently encounter new and interesting issues to consider, which keeps my day-to-day fresh and interesting. It's a great experience for a new attorney, and I'm excited to continue learning and growing in my role.

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If you have any questions about either form of mentoring, or if you would like to be paired with a mentor through our traditional program, please contact Communications Director Erin Cute by email: ecute@ribar.com, or telephone: 401-421-5740.