

### An Interview with Zachary Lyons, Esq.

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

Focus on the Future is a new 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 attorney at Gonzalez Law Offices, Inc., a small law firm in East Providence. My work is exclusively in immigration law, mostly in family-based immigration law, removal and deportation defense.

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

My day is heavy with client interaction. I spend a lot of time engaging in strategy sessions with our clients. I also complete applications for immigration benefits, prepare packages of evidence and waivers, gather medical records, draft documents, and prepare for trial. About once a week I am in court in Boston, and I also appear in District Court in Providence. Sometimes I work on appellate work as well. On Saturday mornings, I am a guest on a radio show on 100.3FM during which I discuss immigration issues.

> **Who is your biggest role model in or out of the law?**

Anthony Bourdain. He inspired me to be courageous, curious, and to be a better listener. I miss him every day.

> **You are fluent in Spanish. How did you learn?**

Before starting law school, I taught English to children in Chile. The family I lived with did not speak English, so I had to learn Spanish out of necessity.

> **What is your favorite flavor ice cream?**

Pistachio Chocolate Chip

> **What do you find most rewarding about your job?**

The most rewarding part of my job is when a case goes well for the client. Many of my clients have been in limbo for years because of their status. We spend all this time preparing for trial and there is an enormous amount of pressure on the situation, given that the outcome will be life-changing one way or the other. If we are unsuccessful, my client will be deported. It all comes down to this one moment. When the judge orders no removal, you see and hear the client take this giant sigh of relief. That moment of total happiness and relief is the most rewarding part of my job.

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

I start every morning by going to the gym at 6 am. It is absolutely essential for me. I have been trying to meditate but it is hard! My wife, Nicole, is so supportive of my career and she definitely helps me keep everything in perspective. I also like spending time with my dog, Louie. Another one of my passions is soccer. On Saturday mornings I watch European soccer. I am a Liverpool FC fan and enjoy watching games with my family. Last summer Nicole and I went to see Liverpool play at Notre Dame and then again in Boston. We got to see them play twice in three days!



ZACHARY LYONS, ESQ.

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

Mexico Garibaldi on Atwells Ave. has the best tacos!

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

Coffee. I am a coffee snob. I couldn't live without my coffee and French press.

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

Honestly, my office was decorated when I got there and I haven't changed it much. Our entire office suite is decorated with "thank you" gifts from our clients from their countries of origin. I have added a picture of Justice Thurgood Marshall and a few pictures of my family.

> **What do you think the immigrant community of Rhode Island needs to hear from the legal community?**

The type of law I practice is unique in that it is the only type of law in the US where you will see 5-year-olds representing themselves. I think the immigrant community in Rhode Island needs to hear that there are lawyers who will take their cases at affordable rates. Some immigrants feel they cannot afford an attorney and instead go to non-lawyer consultants, or notarios, that are not qualified to handle these cases. This cannot continue.



DYSZLEWSKI



HOPKINS