

DAWN E. GOODMAN

Oh, the Places You'll Go! Sharing the Experience of Government Service With Soon-to-Be-Lawyers

In honor of my graduation from law school, a good friend and mentor gave me two gifts. One was a beautiful pen with blue ink. She told me that every lawyer needs a good blue pen. Your enjoyment using it causes you to consciously think each time you use it, and the blue ink ensures that you will always know which version of a document contains your original signature. The second gift was a copy of Dr. Suess's *Oh! The Places You'll Go!* (1990). My friend told me to read the book every so often to remind myself of the exciting places a law degree can take you.



Both gifts have proven invaluable. I use the blue pen to sign important documents, and, each time I do so, I pause for a split second, reminded of the power of the signature I am about to put on the paper. I turn to the book every so often, particularly during my most stressful times, to remind me of my excitement for the legal profession, and how I felt the day I graduated law school. I especially love the first two passages, which read:

Congratulations!
Today is your day.
You're off to Great Places!
You're off and away!

You have brains in your head.
You have feet in your shoes.
You can steer yourself any direction you choose.
You're on your own. And you know what you know. And *YOU* are the guy who'll decide where to go.

As the chair of this year's Federal Bar Association Younger Lawyer Division's Summer Law Clerk series, I had the opportunity to share my mentor's ideals with the next generation of lawyers and introduce them to "places to go."

More than 125 students from law schools throughout the country participated in the series. Most of the students were interning at government agencies in the Washington, D.C., area. The series was designed to expose the students to careers in government service throughout the federal government.

The series began with a kickoff event hosted in the ceremonial courtroom of the U.S. Court of

Appeals for the Federal Circuit. The students learned about the program and then listened to feelings about government service from Hon. William C. Bryson, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit; Hon. Emily C. Hewitt, chief judge of the U.S. Court of Federal Claims; and Olivia Hussey, trial attorney at the U.S. Department of Justice.

Following the kickoff, the students were afforded the opportunity to visit various federal agencies and attend panel discussions. Sixteen federal agencies opened their doors to students for a tour and an opportunity to meet with agency attorneys. The students were able to see, firsthand, how the agencies work and what type of work they do. Some students commented that a visit confirmed their previous desire to work at an agency they visited, whereas others said they used the program as an opportunity to explore agencies they did not know much about.

In addition to the agency visits, the students were invited to attend three panel discussions: a Department of Justice panel, a Department of Defense panel, and a panel discussing tools for seeking employment.

The Department of Justice panel consisted of attorneys from the department, including civil attorneys, criminal prosecutors, and an assistant U.S. attorney. The panel was held at The George Washington University Law School, which hosted a reception following the panel to allow the panelists and law students to continue talking. The attorneys discussed their practices and shared their experiences applying for a job at the Department of Justice. One overarching theme of the discussion was the panelists' initial surprise when they realized just how much responsibility young lawyers are given at the department. The panelists also stressed the importance of job applicants' being themselves during the interview process and commented that this is the only way that both the applicant and the department can determine if the job was a good fit for both.

Active duty lawyers from various branches of the armed forces—including the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Coast Guard—participated in the Department of Defense's panel discussion, which was held at the U.S. Army Litigation Center. The panelists discussed their experiences working as attorneys for the armed forces and introduced attendees to the various types of career options available at the

Department of Defense. After the discussion, panelists and their audience attended a happy hour so that they could continue their discussions.

Finally, the program included a panel focused on employment, at which two distinguished lawyers, Hon. Andrew S. Effron, chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, and Richard Wiley, a partner at the law firm Wiley Rein LLP, discussed various career options, including private practice, government service, and judicial clerkships. The panelists offered a unique comparison of what it was like to work in the public and private sectors, answered questions about how to obtain employ-

ment, and offered several tips about writing cover letters, preparing a resume, choosing a writing sample, and interviewing.

The program truly exposed students to great places to go as well as stories about how to get there. **TFL**

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and administrative improvements to the veterans disability claims process in the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs to assure equitable and expeditious determinations.

Attorney Fee-Based Representation of Veterans

The Federal Bar Association supports proposals to expand the availability of fee-based representation of veterans in the disability claims process and to oppose any efforts to repeal the authority of attorney representation to veterans in the furtherance of such claims.

Frivolous Litigation

The Federal Bar Association opposes legislative proposals to eliminate judicial discretion in the imposition of sanctions for frivolous litigation, including proposals to revise Rule 11 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure by imposing mandatory sanctions and preventing a party from withdrawing challenged pleadings on a voluntary basis within a reasonable time. **TFL**

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makes clear that an SPD does not constitute the plan document or the terms of the plan, misrepresenting and misleading statements contained in an SPD may entitle plan participants to equitable remedies by a mere showing of likely harm. **TFL**

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Endnotes

¹29 U.S.C. §§ 1021, 1022, and 1024. *See also* 29 C.F.R. §§ 2520.102-2 and 2520.102-3.

²Associate Justice Sotomayor took no part in the consideration of the case or in the decision that was handed down.

³29 U.S.C. § 1132(a)(1)(B).

⁴29 U.S.C. § 1132(a)(3)(B).

⁵*Cigna Corporation v. Amara*, 131 S. Ct. 1866, 1877 (May 16, 2011) (Emphasis in original).

⁶131 S. Ct. at 1877-78.

⁷131 S. Ct. at 1878.

⁸131 S. Ct. at 1881.

⁹131 S. Ct. at 1884.

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