



---

GW LAW IN NEW YORK

---

**GW**  **NY**

---

**Spring 2020**

Reflections and Visions

---

THE GEORGE  
WASHINGTON  
UNIVERSITY

---

WASHINGTON, DC

# The Program



**Intensive  
student-centric  
training in  
business law**



**Outstanding  
courses taught  
by top NYC  
lawyers**

Bankruptcy, securities,  
banking, drafting



**Practical  
immersion in  
business law  
internships**

Bankruptcy and commercial  
courts, securities and  
banking agencies, nonprofit  
corporate advice



**Professional  
development  
led by  
top experts**

Networking, persona,  
habits, cultivation, and crisis  
management, a skill that  
came to life on March 11,  
2020

# Our renowned faculty trained us to be the best



**Paul Basta**

*Restructuring*

**Paul | Weiss**



**Larry Cunningham**

*Lawyering*

**GWNY**



**Wendy Goldberg**

*Banking*

**SULLIVAN & CROMWELL LLP**



**Jeff Kohn**

*Drafting*

**O'Melveny**



**Anna Pinedo**

*Securities*

**MAYER | BROWN**

# Top field placements trained us for excellence



# ***Business Lawyering* trained us to be practice-ready**



**March 2020 NYC Business Lawyering Class at Jones Day**

# We honed professional skills in non-credit programs



Jan. 2020 NYC Professionalism Session

# We had generous mentors from our wise GW Law alumni

Adam Koblenz '06 (Sahn Ward)  
Alex Solomon '09 (Scotiabank)  
Art Korzec '80 (JP Morgan)  
Austin Rettew '19 (Arendt Fox) \*  
Barry Lutzky '82 (Schiff Hardin)  
Benjamin Field '18 (Manor) \*  
Beth Goldman '08 (A&E Networks)  
Caroline Pham '11 (Citi)  
Cindy Navarro '17 (O'Melveny)  
Courtney Solomon '09 (Joseph Hage)  
Dan Lowenthal '87 (Patterson)  
David Rosenzweig '87 (Norton Rose)  
David Rusoff '91 (Goldman Sachs)  
Dick Langan '80 (Nixon Peabody)

Eric Honick '76 (McLaughlin & Stern)  
Eashaa Parek '18 (O'Melveny) \*  
Eric Cheng '18 (Davis Polk) \*  
Eric Maki '85 (Jones Day)  
Gisella de la Rocha '17 (Kirkland)  
Ike Sorkin '68 (Mintz & Gold)  
Jamie Lucia '06 (Saul Ewing)  
Janene Marasciullo '80 (Epstein Becker)  
John Hay '80 (Dentons)  
Kelly Carrero '03 (Jones Day)  
Lauren Salter '17 (Milbank)  
Laurie Curnes '13 (Disney)  
Marty Siroka '78 (Katten Muchen)  
Matthew Wright '12 (RBC)

Melanie Taylor '14 (Fried Frank)  
Michael Levine '97 (Kleinberg, Kaplan)  
Michael Vogel '09 (Paul Weiss)  
Omid Rahnama '18 (Paul Weiss) \*  
Phil Anker '82 (Wilmer)  
Phil Tafet '18 (Brooklyn DA) \*  
Ray Dorado '83 (NYS DFS)  
Richard Cohn '91 (Goldman Sachs)  
Roger Stavis '82 (Gallet, Dreyer & Berkey)  
Ted Poretz '79 (Zuckerman Gore)  
Tim Saunders Jr. '91 (Goldman)  
Tracy Schaffer '00 (Jones Day)  
Vince Weisband '12 (O'Melveny)  
Yaasmin Goudarzi '19 (Kirkland) \*

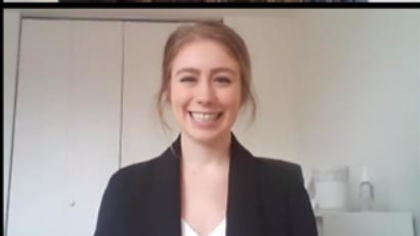
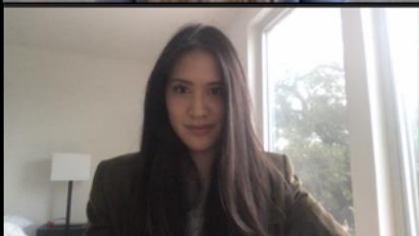
\* GWNYS alum as well as GW Law alum

# We sharpened networking skills—and had fun!



Feb. 2020 Networking Outing





**Above all,  
we adapted ...**

... in ways large and small,  
current and prospective,  
reflected in the following excerpts  
from a compilation of our final essays  
in Business Lawyering,  
“Adapting to a Remote Practice.” \*

\* full version available by request to [gwny@law.gwu.edu](mailto:gwny@law.gwu.edu) or at [www.law.gwu.edu/gw-in-ny](http://www.law.gwu.edu/gw-in-ny)



ADAPTING TO A REMOTE PRACTICE:  
ESSAYS FROM *BUSINESS LAWYERING*  
April 2020

The accompanying essays reflect on how the coronavirus pandemic is reshaping the delivery of professional services, particularly the practice of law. They are written by law students in the New York business law program of George Washington University (GWNY), from the epicenter of the outbreak toward the end of an immersive training program.

These essays are the final installments of the weekly journal writing GWNY students undertake in their *Business Lawyering* class, which I teach. Each week in this rigorous course focused on professional skills and competencies, students write a short essay on a topic related to assigned readings and their field placement internships. (The list of topics appears in the appendix.)

At week 10 of the semester, the pandemic arrived. This shattered the rest of the semester in many ways. First, all subsequent classes were conducted online, internships moved to work from home, networking events were cancelled and the GW Law Dean followed many other law schools to declare that all courses would be recorded as pass-fail, not given letter grades. These changes aside, GWNY stuck with its program and students met all their obligations.

In the last few weeks of the course, student essays began to address implications of the pandemic for professional practice. Indeed, for the final assignment, I asked the students to reflect specifically on how traditional legal skills we considered in *Business Lawyering* need adapting to support rendering legal services by remote means.

As law firms today prioritize servicing clients remotely and designing virtual summer programs, GWNY students anticipate this will be a professional game-changer, whatever the course of current events. They have taken the initiative, beyond mastering the distance classroom as all students now must, to adapt their competencies accordingly, from professional skills such as communications, counseling, and negotiating, to behavioral practices such as professionalism, self-awareness, self-development, networking, good judgment, and confidence. GWNY students are adapting to remain practice-ready.

The students and I are pleased to share with the GWNY community some of their insights on potential changes in legal practice.

Prof. Lawrence A. Cunningham  
Founding Faculty Director, GWNY



**Will Adams**



**Lawyers will play an important role in shaping the future for businesses. From claiming loans for small businesses to complying with the rules to receive bailout money, companies large and small will rely on their lawyers to stay in business the next few months.**

**Regulatory agencies have also begun issuing new guidance in light of the current situation. This will change things for businesses. Procedures for filing documents and filing deadlines have been modified. It will be essential for lawyers to educate themselves on these changes and ensure their clients are adapting to the new normal.**

**Substantive changes to the law extend far beyond our borders. Many countries around the world are passing similar, monumental pieces of legislation to help people and businesses cope with the pandemic. With most large companies operating in multiple countries, lawyers must pay attention to any financing, restructuring, or tax changes world-wide.**

---



**Natalee Ball**

---

Every week *Business Lawyering* has reminded me of an important lesson the University of Texas instilled in me, to “take the world by the horns.” Over the last week, I have had a difficult time in near isolation due to a self-imposed quarantine. In his press briefing, Governor Cuomo encouragingly said, although this is a difficult and confusing time, there are hidden benefits that must be acknowledged.

Thinking about Governor Cuomo’s words and past discussions *in Business Lawyering* allowed me to change my attitude about this state of quarantine and isolation. This change in perspective now fuels me to accomplish one goal each day and make progress to reaching a larger “quarantine goal.”

Even though I have no control over the majority of things happening in life, this mind-set allows me to feel in control of each action I make and drives me to continue to put effort into being the person and lawyer I aim to be. Each morning I take the world by the horns.

---



**Leah Berman-Gestring**



---

**Making the transition to 100% telework has not been without its challenges. Lawyers Alliance, like many organizations has never had the entire staff operating on the remote drive and we tested the limits of its server. One thing that has not changed, no matter the uncertainty or difficulty is the culture of Lawyers Alliance. My supervisor and I have a check in almost every day over video conference; we have a standing all staff meeting every Wednesday and a standing meeting every Thursday for the legal department.**

**Not only has the staff of Lawyers Alliance come together to support one another in a professional relationship, we have all taken a personal interest in each other's lives. Staff share funny stories, pictures and their tales of teleworking woes to lift each other's spirits. They have also taken the effort to check in with each other's mental health, which is something that I didn't expect but am extremely grateful for. During these challenging times, the staff haven't allowed the physical separation that we all are forced to endure to impact the feeling of belonging and support that Lawyers Alliance brings.**

---



**David Burick**

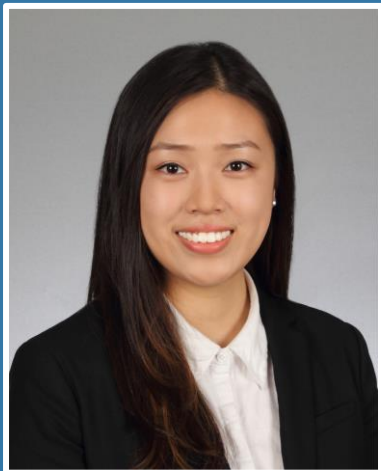
---

**In this new pandemic world of everyone working from home, we business lawyers are continuing the same work we always have, just this time in sweatpants and in the home office or at the dining room table. This being said, there are two important facets of the career to consider: firm culture and client logistics.**

**Firm culture must be implemented much more deliberately now, as it will not grow as naturally with everyone working from home. Firm employees all over the hierarchy can still deliberately treat each other with respect. Artifacts have become digital via firmwide newsletters and announcements. Rather than walking into the partner's office, the associate can call or email them, knowing that they will answer promptly.**

**The answer to these new challenges might not be obvious, but business lawyers will find a way to adapt.**

---



**Stella Chang**

---

**The legal profession is a tale as old as time. The origins are in ancient Greece and Rome. For millennia, our profession evolved and adapted to many changes since then, surviving the Trojan War, the invention of gunpowder, coin currency, bubonic plague, and the collapse of the Empire, and more. . . .**

**The future is here. Communication and organization have taken a hit as people are scattered in their homes with family. Meeting had to fall to Zoom conferences. There is a clear disruption to the organization both within a project and within a firm. With the sweeping changes the pandemic has brought in terms of remote work, attorneys must adapt to our new environment to continue to provide excellent service. In doing so, we are continuing the legacy of our profession.**

---



**Perry Denton**



**When working online, communicating clearly and concisely in writing is a critical skill. When talking in person, people rely heavily on non-verbal aids. Lifehacker.com points out that subtleties do not come through well in electronic communication and that we tend to read “between the lines” when writing is less-than-clear.**

**Details like lack of punctuation, short and abrupt sentences, or other “verbal non-verbals” may lead a recipient of an email or message to negatively interpret the sender’s attitude or mental state. Constant asynchronous collaboration makes it dangerously easy to misinterpret any message from a long-distance team member.**





**Ismail Houdi**

---

We will most likely become more demanding of the digital space after this episode of our shared history as a civilization has ended. People will be more assertive saying, “let’s do a two-hour Zoom meeting.” In my view, the biggest mistake would be for us to collectively go back to the way business was conducted without amending our habits, whether in our professional or personal lives. . . .

The good news is that most skills used within our subset of the legal industry (business lawyers in a law firm setting) can be amended to support provision of legal services by remote means. I see the core of my future profession as resolving clients’ issues. As long as I get all the required input from my client, I should strive to reach a level of autonomy that permits me to correctly and holistically answer the client’s question on my own. No face time is required in this process

---



**Darra Loganzo**

---

**The changing circumstances of the coronavirus pandemic is teaching people around the world that we can adapt. People are adapting with cancelled events that have no precedent of ever being cancelled, people are adapting to staying in their homes and six feet apart, and people in every sector and industry are adapting to working from their living room couch.**

**Lawyers and law students are learning to work and take classes from home and we are slowly getting in the rhythm and routine of teleworking. In addition to teaching us that we can successfully do this, these circumstances have also taught us more about what our role in the legal field really entails and what it means to be a lawyer**

---



**John McBride**

---

**During times of economic feast or famine, investors often quote Warren Buffett’s famous line, “Be greedy when others are fearful and be fearful when others are greedy.” The first portion of Mr. Buffett’s quote encourages investors to find valuable assets worthy of their hard-earned capital when others seem less inclined. The economic slowdown caused by the novel coronavirus has made many professionals fearful. However, these are the times when opportunistic law students can use the challenges imbedded in the moment to create lasting value. . . .**

**Professor Cunningham and Justice Masley each emphasized how important relationships are to business lawyering. They each taught me that a keen legal mind is best supported with a sincere appreciation for people. I hope that all of us exit this national crisis with a renewed focus on increasing the quality of our relationships along with our professional skills.**

---



**James Midkiff**



**There are endless personal and professional opportunities to capitalize on WFH. In a crisis, people are pushed to their limits and opportunities may appear like more work with uncertain gain. Yet for students hustling for an edge, which aptly sums up GWNYS students, WFH provides chances to differentiate ourselves.**

**WFH status impacts all aspects of business lawyering. The theme to success is maintaining professionalism with creating personal rapport over distance. This begins with knowing your audience. Appearance, tone, diction are still the rules, even if they have changed. When uncertain if formality is required, I mirror my counterpart's attitudes in email and calls. It is simple and effective to develop rapport by asking how containment is affecting someone personally and professionally, while sharing quick genuine stories about my experiences.**

---



**Shelsea Moore**

---

Much has stayed the same in our remote service environment. FINRA still has the same mission and goals to carry out. The attorneys are still as passionate and hardworking, and rules are still being amended or added. However, instead of the attorneys having an in-person meeting about these issues, they hold virtual meetings using zoom or skype. Of course, there are small issues that come with virtual meetings, like connection issues, people talking over one another, and lag time in the feed, but these are all easily resolved. Then it is business as usual.

There has been one challenge in the remote service environment, figuring out how to have on the record hearings and witness testimony. There have been a few different ways this has been handled so far, but nothing official has been put in place. As we come to realize the remote service environment is the new normal, I believe FINRA will put more rules in place to guide these procedures, as will the legal field as an entirety.

---



**Ashley Nguyen**

---

**With or without the ongoing pandemic, there has been a slow shift towards rendering professional services remotely. . . . The legal industry can be slow on the uptake and adaptation to new methods, and this pandemic will likely catalyze practice culture to look more like Big Tech, for better or for worse. . . .**

**There is a fine line between utilizing one's right to work remotely and abusing its usage. We have emphasized being client-oriented and providing quick service and responses. In a remote working environment, it can be difficult to set personal boundaries, and young associates may be expected to be even more accessible at all times, increasing the likelihood of burnout. But despite some of these medium changes, the root skills universally remain important: communicating efficiently and effectively and providing value.**

---



**Jenny Wang**

---

**One significant effect of the coronavirus pandemic is the need for companies to test out and implement remote working protocols. Entire companies have been sent home either by choice or through executive orders.**

**Some aspects of WFH are positive. For instance, study shows that a more relaxed work environment enhances creativity, and limiting travel leaves more time for productive billable work. Yet, most employees need to make several adjustments to thrive in this new workplace.**

**First, one needs to adjust his or her expectation for others. . . . Second, one must to take ownership of his or her work and also recognize one's constraints. . . . Third, one has to find ways to add value to a company by taking initiatives.**

---



**Ananda Zhu**

---

**I have heard countless times that lawyering is a “people business”:** indeed, as lawyers, we constantly work with people and help people to solve their legal issues. The current pandemic acutely brought to our attention that people are gregarious and social creatures by nature. Despite the disruption of our current situation, I observed through my experience with isolation over the past month that the professional and interpersonal skills for a successful business lawyer are more important than ever in long-distance interactions. . . .

. . . Regardless of whether I am interacting with a fellow student, a colleague, or a potential client, professional life is never short of difficult situations, some of which may be even more challenging to navigate than the current pandemic. As lawyers, our ultimate duty is to help people find solutions—using our expertise, creativity, and empathy to find a solution to the challenges of remote working is just part of the job.

---



# Selected Motifs of the Business Lawyer

## Skills

Problem solving  
Analysis  
Critical thought  
Research  
Investigations  
Communications  
Counseling  
Negotiation  
Dispute Resolution  
Organization  
Management  
Competent Representation  
Self-Development

## Behaviors

Client Focus  
Adding Value  
Deal Maker  
Self-Directed  
Detail-Focused  
Manage Expectations  
Self-Awareness  
Good Judgment  
Common Sense  
Positive Attitude  
Self-Care  
Stress Management  
People Skills

## Strategies

Competence Model  
Control Cognitive Biases

- Questioning
- Reflection
- Observation
- Coachability

## Crisis Time

Positive Attitude  
Passion  
Grit  
Resourcefulness  
Dedication  
Self-Discipline  
Reliability  
Wisdom  
Judgment  
Gratitude  
Confidence  
Authenticity

# Selected Readings

ABA Task Force, **Defining Key Competencies for Business Lawyers**, *The Business Lawyer* (2016-17)

Black, et al., **Inside the Minds: The Corporate Lawyer** (2003) (chapters: Jerry B. Black, *Overview of Corporate Law Practice*; T. Hale Boggs, *In Partnership with the Client*; John M. Coogan, *It's A Customer Service Business*)

Buffett, Warren E. & Lawrence A. Cunningham, **The Essays of Warren Buffett: Lessons for Corporate America** (5th ed. 2019)

Jaeger-Fine, Toni, **Becoming A Lawyer** (2018)

Ogilvy, J.P., **Learning From Practice: A Professional Development Text for Legal Externs** (2007)

Schön, Donald A., **Educating the Reflective Legal Practitioner**, *Clinical Law Review* (1995)

# Thanks!



Nov. 2019 on-campus reception

GW LAW IN NEW YORK

GW  NY