



Lowenstein Sandler's Women's Initiative Network Podcast: Real Talk

**Episode 23:
How an Associate's Prior Work Experience Can Benefit Their Practice in Big Law**

By [Nicole Fulfree](#), [Amanda Cipriano](#), [Mikayla Berliner](#), [Markiana Julceus](#)

JUNE 2023

Amanda Cipriano: Welcome to the Lowenstein Sandler Podcast Series: The Women's Initiative Network, Real Talk. I'm Amanda Cipriano, an associate attorney and member of the Women's Initiative Network at Lowenstein Sandler. Before we begin, please take a moment to subscribe to our podcast series at [lowenstein.com/podcasts](https://www.lowenstein.com/podcasts), or find us on iTunes, Spotify, Pandora, Google Podcasts, and SoundCloud. Now let's take a listen.

Amanda Cipriano: Welcome to the Women's Initiative Network, Real Talk. My name is Amanda Cipriano and I'm an associate in Lowenstein's White Collar Practice Group.

Nicole Fulfree: I'm Nicole Fulfree and I'm a partner in Lowenstein's Bankruptcy and Restructuring Department.

Markiana Julceus: I am Markiana Julceus, and I'm an associate in Lowenstein's White Collar Litigation Group.

Mikayla Berliner: Hi, I'm Mikayla Berliner and I am a new associate in the Litigation Department.

Amanda Cipriano: Each year, New Jersey state courts hire approximately 500 recent law school graduates to serve as judicial law clerks in the state's court system. That's not including the many hundreds of law clerks serving in the federal court system throughout the state and the rest of the country. These law clerks spend a year or more working closely in chambers with the judge, helping review filings, prepare for hearings, research novel issues, conduct trials, and write judicial opinions. These interactions in chambers cultivate a close and personal mentoring relationship for many. The clerkship experience is one people rave about. In today's episode, we are talking about what happens after the clerkship ends. We will hear from three former law clerks about the transition from law clerk to new associate at a large law firm. To get started, could you each talk about when you clerked, for what court, and what you did after your clerkship?

Mikayla Berliner: Yeah, so I'll get started. I did a New Jersey Supreme Court clerkship right after I graduated from the 2021 to 2022 term. Then I started at the firm this past September.

Markiana Julceus: I also did a New Jersey Supreme Court clerkship right after graduating from law school. That was the 2017 to 2018 term. Then I joined the firm as a second-year associate in the fall of 2018, and then I decided to clerk again. Then I spent two years clerking in the federal district court for the district of New Jersey, and I returned to the firm in the summer of 2021.

Nicole Fulfree: I clerked for a bankruptcy judge in the district of New Jersey, and I'm aging myself now compared to you guys at least, but that was back in the 2013-2014 term. I basically graduated from law school in 2013, started my clerkship in August of 2013, and stayed there with my judge for a year. Then I started at Lowenstein in September 2014 and the rest is history. I've been here ever since.

Amanda Cipriano: Does someone have to go right from law school to a clerkship?

Markiana Julceus: No, not at all. I think it's really a personal decision about when clerking fits into your professional career, and it's different for everybody. There's a lot of things that can impact the timing. For me personally, I always knew I wanted the clerk, so my two a year of law school, I applied for the New Jersey Supreme Court clerkship, and the New Jersey state court has a very specific hiring timeline. You can't apply any earlier than the prior term. For my clerkship in the summer of 2017, I applied in the summer of 2016. The federal judges have a very different hiring timeline. They're each kind of on their own schedules, so it can be kind of unpredictable if you're looking for a federal clerkship. Some of the judges are hiring for a term immediately, others are hiring for future terms.

For example, when I clerked in federal court, I literally, I interviewed in April, and the judge that I interviewed with needed somebody for an immediate start so I literally started that same May. The firm was incredibly supportive of my decision to go to federal court and really learn the ins and outs of federal practice. They really encouraged me to go off and left the door open to come back if I wanted to. The firm was incredibly supportive, which made it possible for me to do both things. I got to clerk right out of law school and again later on in my career.

Amanda Cipriano: It is nice to hear that people go right after law school, and then also after working. I will be starting a clerkship in the fall, which I applied to two or three years ago. That's in the federal courts, so the timeline is very different. Mikayla, why did you choose to do a clerkship?

Mikayla Berliner: I really wanted to learn the ins and outs and how a judge thinks, and I had also heard really great things about it. When everyone seemed to be raving about the clerkships that they did, I knew that I wanted to take advantage of that. Like Markiana was saying, the state court is a very specific timeline, and they typically hire right out of law school, so I really wanted to take advantage of that opportunity and do that as soon as I could. Then, I'm actually also doing a federal clerkship this coming fall, which I applied to during my first clerkship. I loved it so much that I was like, I just need to do another one.

Markiana Julceus: The job so nice you had to do it twice.

Mikayla Berliner: Yes, exactly. I'm really excited about that, and I think it really exceeded all my expectations. I think I went into it knowing that everyone loves it and I went into it knowing I would learn a lot, but the actual one-to-one interaction with your judge is just so unique, especially to start your career. You get the type of close relationship and mentoring that is just irreplaceable in my opinion.

Amanda Cipriano: Nicole, as someone a little more far out from their clerkship than Mikayla and Markiana, what were some of the biggest benefits that you still see in your practice today that positively impact your career?

Nicole Fulfree: It's okay, Amanda, you can say older. Especially being in a specialized practice area, I'm in the Bankruptcy and Restructuring Department, the clerkship provided me with a really broad exposure to all different types of bankruptcy matters and issues in a very short period. It was kind of like a fast track to learning how to be a bankruptcy attorney. Even if you've taken bankruptcy courses in law school, there's so many different types of representations within bankruptcy. Attorneys who go straight into practice might get pigeonholed really quickly into being, for example, a debtor's attorney or a creditor's attorney, and so on. But, getting exposure to all different kinds of lawyers, matters, and cases was a really great way to start understanding how different aspects of the practice worked. That was really helpful earlier on in my career.

It also, at the beginning, gave me a lot more confidence in dealing with other attorneys. I think I would be really nervous to interact with other attorneys because when you start out, basically every attorney that you're dealing with is more senior to you. But when you're the clerk, the attorneys automatically treat you with this super high level of respect, which I felt at the time definitely wasn't warranted. I had no idea what I was doing. I was just learning what an order was. I was learning how the practice of law worked. But then when the attorneys call you, and they treat you with such respect because they're calling chambers, and it really gave me a really good confidence boost in just dealing with other attorneys at an early stage in my career.

Then, now that I'm a little bit more senior, Amanda, I think it helped me with my interactions with judges and chambers. I think I've learned to pay really close attention to judges' questions and kind of get into their mindset and where they're going with something, and whether I need to change my argument in court based on the questions that they're asking and how to respond to them and just how they think. That's been helpful as I've been interacting with courts more in oral argument and so on.

Then, a sort of unexpected one was the ongoing relationships I've gained with the other clerks who clerked for my judge. There were, I think, 14 of us during his full term, and we actually go out to dinner every single year with the judge and his staff and all of us 14 clerks who clerked for the judge at some point, some of whom I'd worked with and transitioned with, some of whom I'd never met until those dinners. But it's a really great way to keep in touch with everyone and it's a really good networking opportunity as well. I think from earlier stage to now the later stage in my career, it's helped me with a bunch of different aspects of my career.

Markiana Julceus: Can I just jumping in on that, I will say that that kind of unexpected benefit that you mentioned rings so true for me as well. I mean, one of the judges that I clerked for, she refers to her network of former clerks, of which there are an abundance of us because she was on the bench for over 30 years, as her legacy, and she considers her clerks to be part of her family. I can imagine that there's not a single one of them that, whether I've met them at one of the judges dinner parties or events that she hosts for her former clerks, if I asked her to pick up the phone and call one of them to help me with something or ask a question, they would do it in a heartbeat.

Mikayla Berliner: I totally agree. I think it's also funny because Markiana and I clerked for the same justice on the New Jersey Supreme Court, and so I felt like I had someone looking after me who I'd never even met, but the justice spoke so highly of her that I was like, "Okay, good. I have someone there to look after me," and she definitely has done that, not only because it's her personality, but I think also just because we have that connection. I think my co-clerks both got jobs through other prior clerks that our justice had, so I think it is a really great networking tool as well.

Markiana Julceus: Yeah, because I think everybody thinks of, "Hey, I'm going to clerk, I'm going to make these connections with this judge. I'm going to get this great experience." It really goes beyond the judge, him or herself. You get the benefit of the judge's entire network, in addition to of course the practical skills that you pick up while you're clerking.

Amanda Cipriano: Speaking of practical skills, Markiana, can you talk a little bit about the different types of things you learned in your first verses your second clerkship, and whether there were any differences and things that stood out from each?

Markiana Julceus: Sure. My first clerkship was on the New Jersey Supreme Court, so that was obviously an appellate level clerkship. Then my second clerkship was in the district of New Jersey, which is obviously a trial court. There were very distinct differences in the workload, but not the workload itself. Actually, I guess that's not the right word. Is the type of work on a macro level, it's exactly the same. Right? Because you're doing the same kinds of things. You're doing legal research and writing, and you're helping resolve whatever the case is before you. But on a micro level, they are very different. My appellate level clerkship, I can probably count how many times the phone rang while I was clerking, and most of the time it was another justice calling to ask to speak to my justice. But when I clerked in the trial court, the phone rang probably a hundred times a day and it was always litigants or counsel. That's one distinct difference is that an appellate level clerkship is a lot quieter.

I mean, the way you look at the issues are different as an appeals court, because especially when you're clerking for the New Jersey Supreme Court, it's the highest court in the state, then you are resolving really critical constitutional issues or matters of first impression. Everything that comes across your desk is new. It would probably be new to you anyway because you're new and you're fresh out of law school, but it is typically new to almost everybody involved, which is both refreshing but also kind of scary.

The way you look at the questions are a little bit different because you're trying to figure out, hey, how should the court deal with this? What is the right answer for the citizens of the whole state? How should this statute be interpreted, or how do we want to interpret this particular fourth amendment issue? Do we want to treat it differently than how the Supreme Court of the United States treats it? The questions are a little bit different.

Then when I was clerking in the trial court, the types of issues, I mean, by six months into my clerkship, the types of things I was seeing, I had seen time and time again. A personal jurisdiction motion, the specific arguments the parties are going to make differs, but the law is exactly the same every time. There's some comfort in that, because you become familiar with it very quickly. I felt like probably the first nine months of my clerkship, I was very scrambled and confused, but once I hit that nine-month mark, I was like, hey, I've seen this before. I can do this. I know what the right answer is. That last year and a half was, it wasn't a breeze by any means, but it was nice to really get a familiarity with the law on those kinds of issues.

You also have parties coming in and out and appearing before you, so you get to see how people argue motions. You get to see what a motion to dismiss should look like, and really get into the nitty-gritty of what good briefs and bad briefs look like. Those who have the benefit of clerking for a magistrate judge, in the federal court in New Jersey, our magistrate judges handle basically everything from when the complaint is filed up through discovery, basically any non-dispositive motions go to the magistrate judges.

I always say that the people who clerk for magistrate judges, that is the best primer for being a litigation associate, because a junior litigation associate, discovery is your bread and butter. The bulk of what you do is going to be handling discovery, the nuts and bolts of that. Really having the ability to see what discovery in a case should look like from beginning to end, and seeing where the pitfalls are, and what happens when opposing counsel threatens to call a judge into deposition and those kinds of things, I think is just a really awesome experience that people who clerk for magistrate judges get to have.

Amanda Cipriano: Mikayla, as going on your six-month here at the firm, how has your transition been from clerkship to firm life?

Mikayla Berliner: I would say it was a stark difference. I mean, I'm sure transitioning straight from law school also obviously has its challenges, but I did have the benefit of being a working person for a year already. I was used to getting up and starting work and having the work week. It wasn't as big of a transition in that sense. I also think that my research and writing skills had a full year to really develop. Like Markiana was saying, at the New Jersey Supreme Court, you're dealt with such unique issues and things that don't have correct answers all the time, which we deal with all the time at the firm as well, because we're trying to advocate for our client, and there's not always something that has exactly happened the same way before. I think my experience at the clerkship of getting creative, in a sense, with what already exists to try to address new things has translated over pretty well.

The other thing that I've noticed in my transition is that I've had to switch my mindset a lot. I think both of you have already touched on this a little bit, but when you're a clerk and you are working with a judge, you're trying to come up with the most correct answer and the most fair resolution. How does this affect later parties down the line? How is this the best for the citizens of New Jersey, or whatever jurisdiction you're in? When you're at a firm, it's, how do we get what we want for our client?

It's a completely different mindset switching from neutral decider to advocate and having to get creative in that sense. Switching my mindset has been, not difficult, but it's just something I have to keep in mind sometimes when I'm researching. At the end of the day, the person who I'm doing the research for wants how we can turn this into an argument. It's not just, here's all the research and here's what the most fair resolution would be. That's not what we're doing and that's not what we're getting paid for. But yeah, I think having the clerkship year was extremely helpful, like Nicole was saying, for my confidence as well. With the transition, it definitely does take some time, I will say.

Amanda Cipriano: Are there any parts of the transition you found specifically challenging?

Mikayla Berliner: I think learning how to adopt to not having one boss anymore has been one of the trickiest parts, because when you're in chambers, it's obvious who the boss is. They like two spaces after every period, or they like things to be single spaced or single-sided, or whatever the case may be. At a firm, you're working for everyone. I have about 50-plus bosses now, so it's been a challenge figuring that out and figuring out everyone's working style and what they like and what they don't like and what they're looking for, and communication style and what works and what doesn't.

It's all trial and error, and you don't have an exact roadmap to follow. I mean, a lot of times in chambers, there literally is a book that somebody wrote with, "Here's how the judge likes everything." I wish that every single person at the law firm came with that. That would be nice, but they don't. That has been, I think, the most challenging part that any new associate has to deal with, not just a law clerk. But, switching from having one boss to a whole bunch has been a little bit tricky.

Nicole Fulfree: Yeah, and Mikayla, another piece of that, it's not just learning the different partners that you're working for, but also prioritizing the work, which is something that comes a lot more naturally when you're working for one person. They know what's on your plate and there's no other partners that are giving you work, or no other judges that are giving you work, so they are much more naturally involved in helping you prioritize. But, when you're working for a bunch of other people, that doesn't always naturally happen. That's definitely a challenge at the beginning for new associates. It was for me, for sure.

Mikayla Berliner: Yeah, definitely is.

Markiana Julceus: Mikayla, do you find that you miss the camaraderie of chambers? That was always one of my favorite parts of clerking, is that you could easily turn to

your co-clerk and be like, "Hey, can you believe what these litigants are arguing? Am I crazy or are they crazy? Is this not?" I find that while I still occasionally do that at the law firm here, it just doesn't lend itself to it as easily. Sometimes I miss that, especially if I'm the only associate on a case because we staff our cases pretty leanly, so sometimes it's just you and a partner or maybe you and two partners or a partner and maybe two associates, that there isn't even someone I can turn to and have that back and forth about a, "Oh, let me walk you through my processing on this issue."

I can obviously do it with the partners sometimes. They're all very welcoming, but I'm obviously not going to go to them unless I have a fully formed thought. Sometimes it's nice to have just a sounding board as you're fleshing things out. I could always count on my co-clerks for that. That I feel is not as easy to do, because I have plenty of friends at the firm and I do often ping them and I'm like, "Hey, do you have five minutes to listen to me chat?" But I just want to talk through something. But, obviously when everybody's worried about billing their minutes, if it's a matter that's somebody's not on, I am not inclined to take up their time.

Mikayla Berliner: Yeah, totally. But I think on the flip side, clerking can get a little bit lonely in a sense. I mean, obviously you have your co-clerks and the judge and the support staff, but it's the same three to five people every single day. I think something that's been exciting about firm life is I'm basically meeting someone new almost every day still six months in. I think that that's been really exciting, and it's a good way to learn from other people and build your network. I think it's a great way to break up the monotony of the day.

Nicole Fulfree: It is also nice to have practice group experts on hand. I know for me, I didn't take tax in law school, for example. Whenever a tax issue comes up, I know my first phone call is going to be like, "Kristen Taylor, what do I do?" But to, Mikayla, your point, you don't really necessarily have someone like that. Obviously, the judge is probably an expert in every issue that comes up, but at a firm, you kind of have a broader base of people who you can reach out to. But agree Markiana, it's kind of hard sometimes if you're asking for that non-billable time, it makes it a little bit stickier.

Markiana Julceus: The emotional support time.

Nicole Fulfree: Yeah, exactly. I try to give that a lot though so that I build up that goodwill, and then I could make those phone calls for non-billable talking through issue time, because it's so important.

Mikayla Berliner: Yeah, totally.

Markiana Julceus: But, that is a good point.

Mikayla Berliner: I think the other part of the transition, Amanda, back to your question, that's been I think obviously tough that we almost forget about it sometimes, is the billable hour mindset and approach. When you're in a clerkship, if you have a question that takes you three days to research, no one cares because it's like, "Well, we want to get the right answer, so yeah, why don't you look at every single state and see how they approach this issue." At a law firm, that's

just not feasible. Having to figure out and adjust to billing your time every six minutes, it is a skillset that you have to build. I think that's also been a big part of my transition that obviously any new associate has to deal with, so again, not unique to a clerk. But, just because I just had that full year of being able to basically have time to do what I need to do, it's been another tricky part of the transition.

Amanda Cipriano: Nicole and Markiana, what advice do you have for a law clerk who is just starting out as an associate at a large law firm?

Markiana Julceus: Yeah, so I think probably my biggest piece of advice, it goes directly to the point Mikayla was making earlier about having multiple bosses and working, and the transition between having working for one person and just learning the judge's preferences, and then joining a law firm where you are working for a multitude of people, is learn the partners and associates that you're working with, kind of build that internal manual that you would get at chambers. Or when the new law clerks start, they normally overlap with the old law clerks for a couple of days. The old law clerks sit you down, they're like, "Hey, this is what the judge likes. When you're doing this, you have to do it this way, and when you're doing this, you have to do it that way. When she shuts her door, don't bother her," and that kind of thing.

Going out of your way to build those kinds of resources for yourself and find out exactly what it is that people, I feel like will make your transition so much easier because everybody has their little idiosyncrasies. If you're proactive about it and ask other associates at the firm, "Hey, this partner asked me to research X, Y, Z issue. Do you think that they would prefer a formal memo? Do you think that they would prefer an email? What's their style? When I send the email, should I attach the cases? Are they going to want to read the cases?" Ask those questions. People are absolutely willing to help you. You can always ask, obviously, the partner themselves. People here are very, very approachable. That's one of the nice things about the place we work. But, that may not be true of everybody at every law firm. I've heard some other law firms have partners that aren't so approachable. But either way-

Nicole Fulfree: No.

Markiana Julceus: But either way, if you can't ask the partner or you don't feel comfortable asking the partner, you don't have to. The other associates are willing to help you, so just be proactive and find out, ask those questions. I think a related point is learning to prioritize efficiency. Before you go and boil the ocean on a particular issue, make sure that that's, one, what the question actually requires, and two, what the partner wants and that they want to spend the time and money doing that.

You don't know what you don't know. I feel like as a former law clerk, my instinct is always to give the most comprehensive answer at all times and flip over every stone and rock and make sure I cover absolutely every issue that could possibly arise, and that's not always the ask. At a law firm it is, in fact, very rarely that that's the ask. Sometimes it is, though. But just make sure that you are answering the question that is asked. If you think you might need to look at cases from jurisdictions other than where the person told you to

look, or you have encountered some other kind of issue, just be proactive about reaching out to whoever gave you the assignment and saying, "Hey, I've done this research. The answer looks like this, but I think there might be these pitfalls or these other things that we might want to look at. Do you want me to look at them?"

Mikayla Berliner: That's great advice, because I've learned that it's better to ask the questions in advance than to submit something that they don't want and then have to redo it. Yes, that is great advice. Thank you, yeah.

Nicole Fulfree: Yeah, I totally agree. Communication is key because especially at a firm, the focus is the billable hour, and the partner very well likely does not want you to spend 40 hours, even though if you know that's what it takes to get to the right result, you should probably check in after the 10th hour of not finding a definitive answer just to make sure everybody's on the same page. Yeah, I totally agree, communication is so important. One thing that I really struggled with is something that Mikayla mentioned earlier, and it's just learning how to effectively take on the role as being an advocate for a client as opposed to being focused on what's right and just the neutral right answer.

Obviously, the right answer is very important, but advocating sometimes requires a little bit more creative thinking, and it's a different way of doing research. I kind of lost sight of that when I first started. I feel like I dived into everything like I was a law clerk and wasn't that good at thinking with an advocate's mindset. But, no, you are looking for the right answer. It's just, how do you distinguish your case, and why has this never happened before? Why is your situation particular? Yeah, it's a little bit more of a creative way of thinking, which I actually have come to like a lot more, but I was internally resistant to it at first. I would say just be aware that that might be your inclination after a full year, or sometimes more, of doing it that way. Just be aware that you might be feeling that way, because people will give you the criticism and they'll notice it if you don't.

Markiana Julceus: Yeah, I say all the time that clerking is the purest form of practicing law, because all you have to do is research the cases and find the correct answer and decide exactly how things should be. There's something really just pure and delightful about that. But, on the flip side here at law firms where we are in the business of making money and we have to get clients to pay us for our bills, the job isn't just to find the right answer. It is to find the right answer, but then make that the right answer for your client. Whether it is distinguishing the bad cases, or kind of shoehorning the facts to fit your client's case, you got to figure out how to make it work. Or absolutely worst case scenario, be like, "Okay, there's no circumstances under which we can do this. It is in fact would be wholly frivolous," and it's fun.

Mikayla Berliner: Yeah, I think something that I'm going to have to do, and probably Amanda you as well when we go off to clerk in the fall, is when you're clerking, there's no answer in your head already. You're simply trying to be persuaded by what you're reading. That doesn't happen at a law firm. You're not being persuaded by the law; you're finding the law and figuring out how to make it persuasive. It's a complete 180, and so I'm glad to hear that both of you

remember dealing with it, because I'm trying to switch myself off of it. I think after six months I'm getting there, but yeah, it definitely takes some time.

Markiana Julceus: Yeah, it's definitely a hard mental shift, but once you make that shift, it's very fun and exciting to find the result that is right for your client. That creative aspect that Nicole mentioned, that rings very true, and it's what keeps the practice of law exciting, at least for me.

Nicole Fulfree: Sure. Then just another logistical tip that I don't think I started to take advantage of until a couple years in, don't be afraid to take advantage of the resources that a large firm offers. I think when you're used to being in chambers with a couple of people, for me it was a three person chambers with my judicial assistant and the judge. I didn't know how to run a red line. I didn't have someone to print out papers for me. I had to do all that on my own. I just was in the swing of doing all those things myself as a first-year associate, but at a larger law firm, you have word processing people who can fix up your document and do your table of contents. You have office services who can do printing and binders for you. There's all these resources that the firm offers to make you quicker at your job, which is really important as a first and second year associate. Make sure you're aware of what the firm offers and definitely take advantage of it. Don't just do it yourself because that's what you're used to doing.

Mikayla Berliner: That's a great point, Nicole.

Markiana Julceus: Yeah.

Mikayla Berliner: That's something I have to remember too, that I often forget.

Amanda Cipriano: Nicole, as a partner, what advice would you give for associates coming off of a clerkship to leverage that clerkship in their role at a law firm?

Nicole Fulfree: I would say that sometimes junior associates can be afraid to speak up on a matter or give advice because they're the most junior person in the room. But, at least my experience was a lot of the more senior people that I was working with in my group hadn't clerked before, and so I think it's really important that juniors shouldn't be afraid to speak up about your experience, especially if you're dealing with your court.

We'd deal with the district of New Jersey a decent amount in my practice, and so I would always bring up, "Oh, I can give chambers a call. I know so and so, we've had lunch before." It's always good to leverage the relationships or just offering your advice about who the best person to call is. I think a lot of people who haven't clerked shy away from calling chambers a little bit, like it's so official. I've had attorneys say to me before, "Oh, don't call chambers about that. You can't do that." I was like, "What do you mean you can't do that? You definitely can do that." People call about way-

Markiana Julceus: Yeah, some fresh law school graduate is going to pick up the phone and answer your question.

Nicole Fulfree: Exactly, and probably panic because they don't know the answer and ask the judicial assistant to help them find the answer. At first, I was a little hesitant to offer that advice to more senior attorneys, but then once I did, they started saying like, "Oh, well go ask Nicole. She clerked, and so she knows." I feel like a clerk is kind of looked at as it's a really prestigious thing. You can really provide some good practical advice for just communicating with courts and things like that. Don't be afraid to bring that up with the attorneys that you're working for, because it's a valuable thing that you can add.

Mikayla Berliner: Nicole, I've even noticed that with my peers that I started with who came from law school. Sometimes they'll come to my office, and they'll say like, "Did you deal with this rule when you were clerking?" Or, "What's the best way to do this and that?" I think I learned things clerking that I didn't even realize it was learning at the time. I think you're right, that it really humanizes the whole court system more when you realize that there's real people behind the decisions and behind the bench. It's not this mystical thing of like, we're going to call chambers. It's just a person, and I was that person six months ago, so it's really not a big deal.

Nicole Fulfree: It's like, "Ooh, chambers."

Mikayla Berliner: Yeah.

Markiana Julceus: Yeah, it's like the Wizard of Oz. You really get to peek behind the curtain and you're like, oh, it's just a man with a sheet.

Mikayla Berliner: Essentially, yeah.

Markiana Julceus: No offense, the judges are great. They're actually, yes, they are mystical and magical and great.

Mikayla Berliner: Of course, but they take their robes off at some point. They're just a person.

Amanda Cipriano: If you all could go back to your 3L self, would you apply for that clerkship again?

Markiana Julceus: Yeah, of course.

Mikayla Berliner: Definitely.

Nicole Fulfree: Yes.

Amanda Cipriano: All right, well, thank you all for sharing your experiences, transitioning from law clerk to associate, and talking about some tips you have for those going through that transition in the future. This has been another episode of the Women's Initiative Network Real Talk. We'll see you next time.

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