

M I C H I G A N
WOMEN IN THE LAW

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What does practicing law mean to you personally and professionally?

When I was little, I recall watching politics on TV and asking my dad why there were no women running for president. He told me it had never been done, but I could change that. I asked him how I could become the first female president and he suggested that I become an attorney, because most presidents started as attorneys.

In college and later law school, I realized I had no real interest in politics and instead wanted to work with people who usually had no real access to attorneys or the court system — everyday people who had a problem or needed help. Employment law is about people, in the most important role of their life, who didn't bring the problem on themselves or didn't ask to be different.

A good day is when I bring change one person at a time. On a great day, I am able to bring change by adjusting a policy or obtaining an opinion in the favor of all plaintiffs.

What do you consider your biggest professional accomplishment and why?

There are two moments. In 2014, while trying a matter in state circuit court, and at the end of a long day of testimony, the court limited my jury instructions (set to be presented after closing arguments the next

morning) in a surprise move that would severely impair my client's ability to collect damages. That night, I drafted and prepared a motion for reconsideration and presented it to the court in the morning. The court reversed its decision, presenting the jury instructions I had originally proposed. In less than an hour, the jury returned a verdict in my client's favor. This was especially sweet because I researched and drafted the brief with my newborn daughter (just 8 weeks old) sleeping on my lap.

In 2015, I obtained a jury verdict, liquidated damages and attorney fees after the matter was initially dismissed. The district court judge had granted summary disposition in the defendant's favor and I had it reversed at the 6th Circuit. My client was not only vindicated but shortly into the trial the judge remarked that he now understood the case and should not have granted defendant's motion earlier. Moreover, he granted my Rule 50 motion just prior to the case going to the jury, leaving only damages for them to determine.

Please share your best tip for balancing your professional life and your personal life.

Listen to advice from experts, friends and colleagues but always do what works best for you and your family.

Sharp has crafted state and federal briefs in areas such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Family Medical Leave Act, sexual harassment, employment contracts, and racial discrimination. She has drafted several handbooks for employers and serves as corporate counsel for local businesses and a local union. She received a "Volunteer of the Year" award for her commitment to Macomb County Habitat for Humanity.

What is your favorite quote?

"Don't confuse income with success."

Everyone has a "guilty pleasure." What is yours?

Reality TV.

How would you describe yourself in one word?

Driven.