

Guardian Spotlight:**Nadia Dahab: A Rising Star in the Legal Community**

Born and raised in Nebraska, OTLA's new Amicus Committee Co-Chair always envisioned Oregon as a magical place where she longed to someday visit. After receiving her Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a five year stint at a civil engineering firm in Dallas, Texas, she knew it was time to make that dream a reality. She moved to Oregon to attend law school at the University of Oregon, where she was Editor in Chief of the Oregon Law Review and a law fellow with the Wayne Morse Center for Law & Politics. Dahab clerked for Oregon Supreme Court Justice Rives Kistler and Mary Murguia and Susan Graber on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. The Portland firm Stoll Berne had the good sense to grab this legal up-and-comer and hired Dahab as an associate for the litigation group in 2015. Her practice focuses on both trial and appellate advocacy, as well as business disputes, securities fraud, employment, property law and the environment. As part of the OTLA Leadership Academy, the sky is the limit for what may lie ahead for this bright legal mind.

In the words of Nadia Dahab:

My worklife has changed in the last year because:

I've started to get into the swing of legal practice. I clerked for three years right out of law school, so before starting at Stoll Berne I had a completely different routine in terms of work. I was writing a lot, researching a lot, and I could predict what my workload and schedule would look like months and months in advance! Of course, that's not always (or ever?) true for private practice and it has taken and will continue to take some time to hit my stride with this new routine. One of the great things about this new routine, though, is getting to work with clients and getting to know the people whose daily lives are affected by our legal system.



Nadia Dahab

The opportunities I see from that change are:

The chance to be a part of positive change — whether it's a specific case in which you're able to secure recovery for your client; an appeal, in which you're able to change the law for a large group of simi-

larly situated people; or showing up in front of your elected representative to help make or change the law through the legislative process. I see so much potential, as a young lawyer, to help shape areas of the law in ways that change peoples' lives for the better.

The best thing about my job is:

My colleagues. I work with some of the smartest, most thoughtful people I've ever met, who live and breathe and work to make the world a better place. Hard work comes so much easier when you're doing it alongside like-minded, passionate people who want to work as hard as you do. And pro bono work — which I think is super important — is much easier to incorporate into your practice when you work with people who feel the same way.

The hardest thing about my job is:

Saying "no." Like I said, I think private practice presents so many opportunities to do good work and make change in really important ways, particularly in today's political and social worlds. One of the biggest challenges I face every day is knowing when to say "no" — I think I always worry that nobody else will say "yes."

What I do in my job is:

At Stoll Berne, I litigate primarily plaintiff's side business and complex litigation. That means I work on a lot of different issues — ranging from litigation over contract disputes between parties (individuals or business) to

large class actions on behalf of victims of securities or consumer fraud. I also maintain an appellate practice, which is also quite varied — I've worked on appeals of personal injury, landlord-tenant, property, employee benefits, and habeas cases.

Growing up I thought I would become:

An engineer. And I did, for a while! I practiced in water resources engineering for five years. I suspect I'm one of the few lawyers in the Portland legal community with a law degree, a license to practice civil engineering, and a (now outdated) certification in floodplain management. (Yes!) Engineering was a childhood dream of mine — my dad was an engineer, and I certainly grew up in a family and a community that was empowering for women in science.

Why I did/didn't (see above):

By the time I started high school, I was pretty set on trying out the engineering thing, and there just wasn't much that could change my mind. I did, however, second guess myself when I was a participant in the Classroom Law Project's We the People constitution team — we went to the national competition (I think we placed 11th in the nation) and I was just enthralled by the study of constitutional law. It made me wonder whether law might be a career for me going forward, but like I said, I was not easily deterred from the engineering path.

Well, trust your gut, I suppose. Don't get me wrong, engineering was great. Somewhere along the way, though, I met a few lawyers, started working with the lawyers that engineers cross paths with (city attorneys, land use, and water rights attorneys) and found myself with a curiosity I could not ignore. It was 2009, the economy was about to have a big effect on my engineering practice, so I figured it was as good a time as any to try something new. If it didn't work out, I could always go back to engineering. The rest, of course, is history — I took the LSAT, moved to Eugene, and quickly realized that law was what I really wanted to do all along.



Nadia Dahad after completing the 2016 Ironman in Idaho.

There’s more to life than my job. My favorite activities are:

I’m a pretty avid (maybe obsessed?) runner, so when I’m not at work (and often when I should be) you’ll find me cruising around the waterfront or in Forest Park. I take my running shoes with me everywhere I go—it’s something that makes me feel alive and capable, no matter what. In March, I’m heading off for a two-week trip to Antarctica to run a marathon on the Antarctic Peninsula. (See why “avid” might not fully describe this love I have?) I also love camping, hiking, biking and adventuring throughout Oregon (but Southern Oregon, in particular).

I relax by:

Taking it slow on a weekend morning with a good book, the newspaper and a cup of coffee. I’m even more relaxed in the summertime when I can do those things on the front porch.

I’ve always wanted to:

Locally, I’ve always wanted to run the full length of Wildwood Trail in Forest Park.

I’ll do it (see above) when:

We come out on the other side of this awful winter and the trail dries up. Anyone who wants to join me, feel free!

I’m proudest of:

Particularly now, but always, I’m very proud to be the daughter of a Libyan immigrant. My dad moved to the

United States from Tripoli to study at an American university when he was 21. His whole family stayed behind. He’s been able to visit them only a few times since he moved here, and most of them I’ve never met. But I’m really proud of what he has become (a university professor and a leading expert in his field), and even more grateful for what he

has taught me about working hard, making change and valuing family and culture.

I wish:

Everyone would see the value in those things. (See above.)

I can’t live without:

My running shoes, coffee, the sun, and nut butter, not necessarily in that order.

Most influential person in my life:

My dad. I mentioned him earlier, but he’s the smartest, hardest working, most thoughtful person I know, who has managed to change the world around him just by the hard work he does.

My motto:

I don’t know if I have a motto, but I try and live by that question, “what would you attempt to do if you knew you could not fail?” I don’t know who originally asked it, or where it’s from, but I think of it and it gives me permission to do all sorts of crazy, scary stuff.

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