



The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law

Nevada state senator balances partnership, family



Aaron D. Ford '01

Aaron D. Ford '01 is no stranger to balancing the opportunities and challenges that life can bring. After receiving his J.D. and Ph.D. degrees through the Moritz College of Law's joint-degree program, Ford is now a Partner at Snell & Wilmer L.L.P. in Las Vegas, as well as Nevada State Senator, two experiences he described as both demanding and rewarding.

Ford was elected Partner in 2010 and concentrates his practice on commercial litigation and alternative dispute resolution. He has a number of other duties as well, which include bringing in clients, overseeing associates, serving as ambassador for the firm, and providing input for various internal committees.

Although his position keeps him busy, it didn't stop Ford from pursuing another long-term goal. Ford ran for State Senator in 2010, and although he was not elected, he successfully ran again in 2012 with the primary motivation to improve Nevada's educational system.

His political agenda, combined with firm duties and responsibilities as a husband and father, has proved to be quite demanding.

"It's a full-time job, frankly, and it takes a lot of time, energy, and effort to do that and at the same time be a full-time partner at a law firm," Ford said.

Yet, Ford has accomplished goals that have led him to be recognized as "best Senate freshman" in a poll by the Las Vegas Review Journal and "Rookie of the Year" by Reno Gazette Journal reporter Ray Hagar.

Despite the acknowledgment for his work, Ford said it is not the reason he became a senator.

"I'm just doing what I like to do," he said. "I'm not doing it looking for accolades or recognition; I'm doing it because it's right. If you happen to get an accolade because of it, then that's great, but that's not something I strive to achieve or to receive. It's just a matter of trying to represent the constituents in my district, and as it turns out, I've been recognized for it. I'm flattered."

Ford credits his success at becoming Partner and Senator to the foundation built in his prior career experiences. After graduating from Moritz, he transitioned to working as a law clerk for both the U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Michigan and Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, where he was given the opportunity to strengthen his writing and oral advocacy skills.

"I think that the exposure I got as being a law clerk on the inside gave me great insight to what judges, at least on the federal side of things, look for in terms of brief-writing and attorney work product," Ford said. "That was very helpful to me."

Those experiences were the key to Ford's success as he progressed to the role of associate attorney at what is now known as Bracewell & Giuliani LLP and, subsequently, Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP.

While Ford said his time at both firms was incredibly beneficial, his work at Weil, Gotshal & Manges prepared him for professional demands later in life.

"It was a very hard-driving, hour-intensive environment that helped me to strengthen my writing skills and my advocacy skills," he said. "It also gave me stamina that I think ends up supporting me to this day."

Reflecting on his own career path, Ford recommends current law students look to develop mentor-mentee relationships as early as possible.

"Seek out and search for people you can latch onto and learn from," he said. "But also at the same time, be looking back and try to help people who are coming up behind you."

Article by Shay Trotter