

MEMBER PROFILE - STACEY A. KARTCHNER BY STAN JONES



Stacey Kartchner

I have been asked to guest-host this month's Member Profile column in order to keep a long-standing tradition. For many years, this column has used the April issue of the Newsletter to profile the incoming President of CDBA. This year's President is Stacey Kartchner. So I am writing the Member Profile this month, thus avoiding the otherwise awkward situation of Stacey having to interview herself!

Stacey was born and raised in Salt Lake City, Utah. She received her BA in Political Science from the University of Utah in 1998. Stacey relocated to San Diego to attend law school at Cal Western, where she served as Senior Editor of the Law Review. While there, she also received an Academic Achievement Award, was placed on the Dean's List, and received the Pro Bono Honors Award for her efforts on behalf of indigent criminal defendants. During her third year, she also completed an internship with Federal Defenders of San Diego.

During law school, Stacey went to work for the law firm of Grimes and Warwick. After 10 years with the firm, she made the decision to go solo, and for the last few years has been engaged in private practice devoted exclusively to criminal defense.

In addition to the ongoing demands of her solo practice, she is committed to the concept of public service. She is an active member of the County Bar Association, NACDL, CACJ, CDBA (where she is not only President, but also Editor of this Newsletter), CDLC (where she serves as Executive Director), and Lawyer's Club of San Diego (where she serves on the Lawyer's Club News Editorial Board). Over the past two years, Stacey has also been instrumental in representing the interests of the private defense bar in developing operating procedures for the recent AB 109 Realignment with the Community Correc-

tions Partnership. Besides these numerous affiliations, Stacey also finds time to volunteer for Stand Down every year and several other non-law related community organizations. Currently, she is on the Board of Directors of ACCION San Diego, a nonprofit organization involved in microcredit. Prior to that, she served on the Board of Trustees of the Foundation For Women, a nonprofit organization that gives microcredit loans to women in San Diego and Africa. (Whew!!) It seems that, wherever you go, there she is.....

In her spare time, Stacey enjoys exercising, playing her drums, and traveling. One of her favorite things to do is meet her father at various stadiums around the country to attend University of Utah football games. She is an avid sports fan.

What is your earliest recollection of a desire to become an attorney?

When I was 19 years-old, I obtained employment as a receptionist at Athay & DeLand, a small criminal defense firm in Salt Lake City. I had been raised to believe that the police and prosecution were always right. The more I read through the files and spoke with the clients, however, the more I realized this was not the case. We had a client, Elroy Tillman, that had been on death row for over 10 years. Elroy would call me 3-4 times per week just to chat. We became friends. Within one month of working at Athay & DeLand, I knew I wanted to become a criminal defense lawyer. I wanted to help free Elroy from death row. (Incidentally, a few years after I graduated from law school, Elroy's lead counsel, Loni DeLand, was successful in getting Elroy off of death row. Elroy was re-sentenced to life without possibility of parole due to prosecutorial misconduct.)

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Why did you decide to specialize in criminal defense?

See above.

What is your work experience, if any, prior to becoming an attorney?

From 11 years-old to 16 years-old, I worked eight hours every Saturday landscaping. At 16 years-old, I began working in the restaurant industry. I worked for the same restaurant for nine years and was able to put myself through school. In addition to working part-time at the restaurant and attending college at night, I also worked full-time during the day. As indicated above, my first law job was at Athay & DeLand. Two years later, I went to work for the Utah State Bar, Office of Attorney Discipline, as the Ethics and Discipline Coordinator. Three years later, I moved to San Diego for law school. During my first year, I obtained employment at Grimes & Warwick. I also worked at Luce, Forward, Hamilton & Scripps doing clerical work on the weekends.

Whom do you consider to be your two most significant law mentors?

Tom Warwick and Bob Grimes. I had the great fortune to be able to work under these two brilliant minds almost every day for 10 years. I was constantly amazed at the breadth of their legal knowledge and their ability to dissect the most complex legal issues. They seemed to always have the answer. In addition, both Tom and Bob are of very strong character and they operate at the highest level of ethics. I also admire them for giving so much of their time to the legal community. I am very grateful for all they have done for me, and for their continued friendship.

Whom do you consider to be your two most significant mentors in life?

My grandparents. My grandmother for teaching me independence and a strong work ethic. My grandfather for teaching me integrity, compassion, and the value of service.

Last year you ran with the bulls in Pamplona. What's next on your personal bucket list?

I am due to give birth to my first child in August. I am really looking forward to that adventure.