



NETWORKING AND BAR INVOLVEMENT: Finding Ways to get Involved in Nevada's Legal Community

BY MELISSA CORRAL, ESQ., AND SOPHIE SALCEDO, ESQ.

Networking establishes, builds, and nurtures long-term, mutually beneficial relationships. Experts agree that the most connected people are often the most successful.¹ When you invest in your relationships – professional and personal – it can pay you back in dividends throughout the course of your career.² This article will discuss the benefits networking and bar involvement had in building and nurturing the lives of the authors – two first-generation Latinas who have become successful attorneys in Nevada.

Boyd Helps Corral Make Lasting Connections

Upon beginning my law school career, I did not understand the importance of networking. That quickly changed. During

my first week at the William S. Boyd School of Law, I attended a session with upper classmen to advise us on what to expect during the upcoming years. One of the first things they told us was that the law community in Nevada is extremely small, and it is important to greet everyone with respect, as if you were greeting a family member, because it was likely that we would see that same person at another event or a potential interview. If we made a good impression, it could lead to a great opportunity.

At the start of law school, I had been working as a customer agent for a local casino for a number of years. I did not comprehend the need to get to know people or reach out if I needed something. My first year of law school presented struggles, and I quickly realized I needed to establish myself in the legal community. After that realization, I joined organizations that interested me. I was a part-time student and Hispanic. Therefore, the Organization for Part-Time and Non-Traditional Students and La Voz, the Latin/Hispanic student organizations were obvious choices. The one organization I was surprised to join was the Student Bar Association (SBA). I did not see myself as someone who wanted to represent my class or speak up if needed. Somehow, by my third year in the organization, I became president. This position gave me the opportunity to meet the then-alumni president, the Honorable Judge Linda

Marquis, who would become my first boss in the legal field after graduation.

As my clerkship went on, Judge Marquis told me that one of the reasons she hired me was because she could put a face to the name on a resume. She remembered a conversation we had during my time as SBA president and believed I would do a good job as her clerk. Having the clerkship opportunity helped me understand topics like civil procedure and gave me the opportunity to meet new people and form real connections: from law clerks who are still friends today to practicing attorneys who offered a lending hand when I needed it most.

Networking also became instrumental when I failed the bar exam. I reached out to as many people as were willing to listen and asked for any advice they had. Some of the attorneys I met in law school were even willing to sit down and go over my results to provide different paths for me. This support is something I will never forget and aim to reciprocate as I continue my legal career.

After passing the bar and establishing myself at the job I wanted, I got involved in organizations that I am still passionate about. I joined the Nevada Latino Bar Association and the William S. Boyd School of Law Alumni Chapter. In these organizations, I have developed friendships and built a network I can lean on for requests ranging from asking for a letter of recommendation to advice about



career advancement. Networking changed my career.

Salcedo Makes Connections Through Legal Associations

Practicing law in a state other than the one where you went to law school can be a daunting process. Luckily, networking can be a useful tool to help bridge the gap and establish meaningful connections. While I was born and raised in Las Vegas, I went to law school at Emory University School of Law in Atlanta. During my time in law school, I networked as much as possible. As I spoke to different attorneys who practiced in varying areas of law, networking came up as the single best piece of advice I received.

As part of my networking journey during the first year of law school, I joined the Georgia Latino Leadership Fund (GLLF)³, where I met one of my future mentors, Ana Maria Martinez. I established a great relationship with her and sought advice for the best summer internships and how to write a strong cover letter. Through the course of this relationship, she, unbeknownst to me, nominated me to serve as the Region 7 president of the Hispanic National Bar Association⁴ (HNBA) Law Student Division. I was completely shocked that she took the time to recommend me for something I probably would have been too nervous to seek out on my own. It was only through my networking connection that my name made it to the list.

I was honored to ultimately be selected as the Region 7 president. I would have never known about this opportunity, or gotten the position, without taking that first step of joining GLLF. It was scary and intimidating to go to my first event alone without knowing anyone, but the end reward was worth it.

Through my leadership position within the HNBA, I became aware of the Uvaldo Herrera Moot Court competition. Again, this event was something that I never would have been aware of, or considered, without establishing connections within the organization that made me feel confident about participating. It was one of my greatest honors to participate in the moot court competition in Albuquerque for the HNBA Annual Conference. It was an even bigger honor to be awarded Best Brief for the Petitioner.

Fast-forward two months and I was sitting alone in a classroom at UNLV for the mock Barbri MBE practice exam. I had spent the past three years building my reputation in the Atlanta legal community and was nervous that I would never fit in the Las Vegas legal community, which is known to be close-knit. Already anxiety-ridden due to the pending bar exam, I felt even more isolated seeing nearly everyone in the room who went to law school

together sitting and talking next to each other. I knew not one single person.

That all changed when a friendly face came and sat down next to me. She looked over at me and said, “Hey, didn’t you go to the HNBA conference in April, and didn’t you win an award?”

Completely shocked, I said, “Yes! How do you know?” and she said, “I was there, too. I remember.” Ellsie Lucero became an instant friend to me in that moment. She had graduated from Boyd and knew everyone in the room, yet decided to come say hello to me – a girl she remembered seeing at a conference.

Immediately, Lucero started making plans to get me affiliated with the legal community in Las Vegas. We exchanged phone numbers, and she invited me to an event hosted by the Nevada Latino Bar Association.⁵ Although I still felt those same anxious feelings walking into my first event, I knew it could be the start of something great. I was welcomed with open arms and felt right at home. The next year, I was elected to serve as a director at large on the executive board.

One of the most valuable lessons I have learned through my networking experience is that it only takes one person to completely change your course and

“**Luckily, networking can be a useful tool to help bridge the gap and establish meaningful connections.**”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

NETWORKING AND BAR INVOLVEMENT

invite you to a new world of opportunities and friendships. Networking can lead you to your own Martinez or Lucero. Go to that first meeting, take that initial step, and wait to see how it can change your life.

There are many opportunities to network here in Las Vegas or throughout the rest of Nevada. One of the easiest things to do if you are Boyd alumni is to reach out to Boyd's Alumni Chapter to see a list of its upcoming events. If you have a specific interest, most fields of law have specific State Bar of Nevada sections, such as the Young Lawyers or the Elder Law sections, that you can join by paying a small fee with your bar license renewal every year.⁶ There are also other organizations out there⁷ where you can participate or volunteer. The important thing is to get out and make use of the connections you make every day to start seeing the dividends in your careers, as we both did.

MELISSA CORRAL is a staff attorney at the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada. She was raised in Mexico and relocated to Las Vegas at the age of 12. She attended the University of Nevada, Las Vegas for her undergraduate degree and the William S. Boyd of School of Law. She graduated law school in 2014.



SOPHIE SALCEDO is a criminal defense attorney at Las Vegas Defense Group. She was born and raised in Las Vegas. She attended the University of New Mexico for her undergraduate degree. She attended Emory University School of Law in Atlanta, and graduated in 2019.



ENDNOTES:

1. <https://www.topresume.com/career-advice/importance-of-networking-for-career-success>
2. Id.
3. <https://www.galatinolawfoundation.org/>
4. <https://hnba.com>
5. <https://www.nvlba.com>
6. For a full list of sections go here: <https://nvbar.org/for-lawyers/bar-service-opportunities/join-a-section/>
7. i.e. Nevada Latino Bar Association, Nevada Justice Association, Nevada Chapter of the National Bar Association, Southern Nevada Association of Women Attorneys and much more.

MEET YOUR FINANCIAL HEROES

Annually, more than \$600 million is held in Nevada lawyer trust accounts. These financial heroes have agreed to pay favorable rates on all IOLTA accounts under deposit. Leadership institutions pay premium rates.

The Nevada Bar Foundation grants more than 97% of the interest earned on these dollars to statewide legal service organizations serving more than 37,000 Nevada families.

American First National Bank

Bank of America
Bank of Georgia
Bank of Nevada
Bank of the West
Chase
Citibank
City National Bank
East West Bank

Financial Horizons Credit Union

First Citizens Bank
First Foundation Bank
First Independent Bank
First Savings Bank
First Security Bank of Nevada
GenuBank

Heritage Bank

Lexicon Bank
Meadows Bank
Nevada Bank & Trust
Nevada State Bank
Northern Trust Bank
Pacific Premiere Bank
Plumas Bank
Royal Business Bank
Silver State Schools Credit Union
Town and Country Bank
US Bank
Valley Bank of Nevada (BNLV)
Washington Federal
Wells Fargo

