

NEVADA TRAILBLAZERS

Meet Jonathan Lee:

Team Player and Self-Starter

BY MARY BACON, ESQ.,
AND RYAN GORMLEY, ESQ.



Being a good teammate is par for the course for Jonathan Lee. Growing up in a large family, Lee's focus has always been on what is best for the team. He wants to find the best situation for as many people as possible.

Lee grew up in Maryland. His father was in the U.S. Army and his mother ran a home daycare. Both having grown up in the working class in Washington, D.C., his parents dreamed of creating more opportunities for their children. The stability the military offered proved to be just the ticket, and the family moved to the suburbs. The pair had always wanted a big family, and after welcoming three boys, they decided they would try for one more baby—hoping for a baby girl. Nine months later, Lee's parents became the proud parents of five boys when Lee and his twin brother, Justin, were born.

When Lee was a child, his parents focused on instilling values from church, the importance of education, and hard work in their children. It was not uncommon to see the family at their local church several nights a week – a “luxury” that fortunately let up as Lee entered middle school, he said with a smile. Although growing up in the suburbs, Lee always appreciated the connection that his church gave him to Black culture.

Much to his parents' delight, Lee was always motivated to do well in school, and it came easy for him. He regularly earned a place on his school's honor roll. With five young boys in the house, their routine was intentionally simple: school, sports, church. Repeat.

Having witnessed his parents' strong work ethic, Lee was happy to get a job as soon as he was able. He started working as a cashier at McDonald's at 15 years old and then started as a sales associate at Blockbuster as he finished high school.

After graduating from high school, Lee attended Towson University. It was the perfect location for

college; it was just far away enough from home to gain independence, but close enough to drive home over the weekend to see his parents. He pursued a double major in economics and political science. In addition to a busy courseload, Lee worked throughout college. He had a job at the library through a federal work-study program; he worked as a carpet tech at Stanley Steamer, and he served as a sales representative at Sherwin Williams.

During his last year of college, his father unfortunately passed away due to complications with cancer. However, such adversity did not deter Lee from taking the next step in his education. Shortly after earning his undergraduate degree, Lee set his sights on higher education, weighing his options between a master's in economics and law school. The primary factor in his decision was how he could best use his voice to make an impact and help people. After serious deliberation about the impact the law could have in helping people, law school prevailed.

The decision to pursue law was not a surprise to Lee's older brother.

"Jonathan has always been pretty independent and industrious," Aundrae Lee said. "He was somewhat of a serious and feisty child but as he grew up his sense of humor kicked in and he keeps everyone around him laughing. It was no surprise to me when he announced he wanted to go into the legal profession. Growing up Jonathan would always argue with us older siblings. And because he was so logical and quick-witted, he was always able to win an argument. I am so proud of everything that he is and has become. I know my parents are beaming with pride."

Despite only having been away from the east coast once, Lee chose to attend the William S. Boyd School of Law at UNLV. During law school, he was an active member of OUTLaws and the Black Law Students Association. Always one to stay busy, he worked part-time as a law clerk at Marquis Aurbach Coffing, which dovetailed into his first job as an attorney.

Since law school, Lee has been actively involved in the Las Vegas Chapter of the National Bar Association (LVNBA). In addition to serving several terms as the parliamentarian, he is the chair of the scholarship and pro bono committees. He is also a member of the foundation and the gala committee.

"It would be hard to overstate the impact Jonathan has on the Las Vegas Chapter of the National Bar Association," said Angela Cook, president of the LVNBA. "He is a passionate and committed member of our board. He takes leadership roles on multiple projects and always executes them. He selflessly volunteers his time and resources and is the first to offer to help other members. He's such a valued member of our team."

Lee is also on the board of advisors for Silver State Equality, which advocates for pro-LGBTQ legislation. Lee has also taken Children's Attorneys Project cases through the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada and previously served as a faculty advisor for UNLV's externship program.

Today, Lee is a busy personal injury attorney at Richard Harris Law Firm.

"Although personal injury law can be hectic at times, I am fortunate to be in a position to help people through the legal process," he said.

When Lee is not at work or volunteering in the community, he loves to listen to music and play sports. He is also an avid Washington, D.C.-area sports fan.

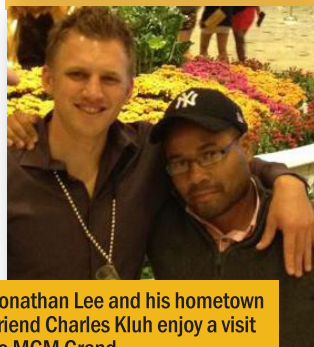
A young Jonathan Lee is held by his mother in a family photo. The rest of the family includes brother Jason (from left), brother Aundrae, brother Kenny, father John, twin brother Justin, cousin Myesha, and his mom, Wanda.



Jonathan Lee and his paralegal Nicole Gilenson hold a royal flush at the Richard Harris Law Firm.



Jonathan Lee (second from right) celebrates his graduation from the William S. Boyd School at UNLV with Scott Morris (from left), Loline-Marie Djidade, Brittne Watkins, Steven Washington, and Tyre Gray.



Jonathan Lee and his hometown friend Charles Klueh enjoy a visit to MGM Grand.



Jonathan Lee (seated, second from left) visits Cancun, Mexico, with friends Oscar Siguenza (from left), Nancy Cano, Gisele Cano, Veronica Perez-Kahl, and Mariela Perez.