



NEVADA TRAILBLAZERS

Meet Ash Marie Blackburn:

Nevada Attorney Fulfills Her Grandmother's Dreams with Hard Work

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

Sixty years ago in Louisiana, Joy Ganier worked in a jewelry store. Although she dreamed of becoming a lawyer and traveling to Paris, the realities of life in the 1960s rendered such dreams all but impossible. Yet, five decades of progress later, Ganier's granddaughter, Ash Marie Blackburn, who shared her grandmother's dream of becoming a lawyer, had opportunities that her grandmother could have only dreamed.

And while it would not be easy, Blackburn, who would go on to work in just about every job a law firm has to offer, would not let anything stand in her way.

Growing up in North Las Vegas, Blackburn attended A-TECH, a magnet public high school, where she was part of a program focused on the law. It was during high school that she had her first job in the law. Eager to gain practical experience and excited about the prospect of making some money, Blackburn started working at Mainor Eglet as a copy clerk her senior year. She continued both school and working full time at a law firm for the next decade.

After high school, Blackburn attended the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, graduating *cum laude*, and becoming the first person in her family to graduate from college. While in college, Blackburn continued to work full time at Mainor Eglet. As opportunities presented themselves, she always jumped at the chance for more responsibility, transitioning from clerk to assistant to paralegal, even serving as a paralegal on the trial team for the hepatitis litigation in 2011.

Blackburn's dedication and skill earned her the professional and personal respect of her Mainor Eglet colleagues, including Judge David Wall.

"I had the good fortune to work with Ash before she became a lawyer," Wall said. "Even then, it was evident that she had the skill and the drive to do great work as a lawyer. She was a talented writer even before law school and has basically worked harder than everyone else to make herself the lawyer she is today. Beyond that, she's an even better human being. Her clients, her co-workers, and even her adversaries respect her commitment and trust her word."

With her sights set on law school, Blackburn, per the advice of her colleague and mentor, Robert Adams, focused

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on achieving a strong LSAT score. She managed to do just that while working full time as a paralegal and part time as a cashier at Sprouts. Her scores resulted in full scholarship offers from the William S. Boyd School of Law and the University of Denver. Although tempted by the allure of Denver, she ultimately chose to remain in Las Vegas. During law school, she continued to work full time, now at Mainor Wirth, where she served as a litigation paralegal before becoming office manager.

Upon graduation and passing the Nevada Bar Exam, Blackburn was promoted to Mainor Wirth's managing attorney—a culmination of 10 years of hard work. Her remarkable rise from clerk to paralegal to managing attorney, however, was no surprise to Mainor Wirth's founding partner, Brad Mainor.

"Ash's belief in herself is more like knowledge," Mainor said. "There's nothing she is afraid to try, and in turn, perfect. She is a relentless and vigorous force for the people she represents."

Reflecting upon her decade in the law before graduating, Blackburn said: "I am grateful for the knowledge I gained having worked at nearly every stage of civil litigation. It helps me think about a case from all angles and ensures I don't leave any stone unturned."

When not advocating for clients or managing the firm, Blackburn can often be found reading. She is a self-described bookworm. Her favorites are the classics: "Pride and Prejudice," "To Kill a Mockingbird," and "On the Road." In fact, she has a sleeve of tattoos, almost all of which are literary-based. Her favorite is a fox tattoo from "The Little Prince (Google it)." Her deep passion for reading has turned into a passion for writing. She is currently 60,000 words into writing a coming-of-age story about a young woman, searching for purpose.

Recently, she married James Blackburn, and the two now have a son, Remington. And, as of this writing, while her grandmother never did become a lawyer, Blackburn intends to make her grandmother's second dream come true, as she is scheduled to take her grandmother with her on a trip to Paris.



Ash Marie Blackburn; her husband, James; and son, Remington, visit Big Bear, California.



Bradley Mainor, Ash Blackburn, and Joe Wirth pose at Mainor Wirth.



Ash Blackburn (left) and her best friend, Julia Occhuizzo, visit Breckenridge, Colorado.



Ash Blackburn and her grandmother, Joy Ganier, celebrate Christmas together. Ganier dreamed of becoming an attorney and passed that dream down to her granddaughter.

January 2022 • Nevada Lawyer