

M I C H I G A N

WOMEN IN THE LAW

2016

Jennifer L. Lord

Partner, Pitt McGehee Palmer & Rivers PC,
Royal Oak
Wayne State University Law School

What does practicing law mean to you personally and professionally?

In college, I was convinced that I wanted to go into politics. I was thrilled when I landed a job as a legislative assistant in Washington, D.C. At first, it was glamorous and fun. But as time went on, I realized that I was spending a lot of time asking people for money instead of working on policies and projects that actually helped people.

I switched gears and enrolled in law school so that someday I could make a difference. I've been drawn to civil rights issues for as long as I can remember. Employment law is a perfect niche to advance and protect those rights on an individual basis. It is such an honor to work with clients over months and years. And to watch them move from what is one of the more traumatic events of their lives — losing a cherished job — to feeling empowered and taking an active role in fighting an injustice.

What do you consider your biggest professional accomplishment and why?

I do not know if this is the "biggest" professional accomplishment, but it is the one that makes me the most proud. I represented a very sweet man who suffered an especially severe psychiatric injury when he was fired from his lifelong employer after a new manager harassed him in one of the most vicious manners I had ever heard. He was emotionally devastated and it took months of working

with him and his therapist to make it possible for him to give a deposition.

We had to do the deposition in two-hour increments over many days because he would begin to cry uncontrollably. When we were finally finished, he was so relieved and proud of himself. The case resolved shortly after his compelling testimony, and he and his wife were able to buy a dream home in Arizona and start their lives over. We became friends during the case and remain so to this day.

Please share your best tip for balancing your professional life and your personal life.

I have two tips for balancing my professional and work life: 1) gin and 2) tonic. Seriously, I think that it is critical to surround myself both professionally and personally with people that I genuinely like and that genuinely like me. Truly trusted friends and colleagues are my support system to maintain a healthy balance.

What is your favorite quote?

From Robert F. Kennedy: "Progress is a nice word. But change is a motivator and change has its enemies."

What are two things about you that not many people know?

I can pick up almost anything with my toes and my favorite pizza toppings are anchovies and onions.



Lord represents clients in employment discrimination, whistleblower, breach of contract and Family and Medical Leave Act claims. She is a member of the Oakland County Bar Association's Circuit Court and Professional Development committees, and is active with the Michigan Coalition for Human Rights. In addition, Lord helps collect and distribute personal hygiene products to local battered women and homeless shelters.

How would you describe yourself in one word?

Kind.