

Miami Law Alumni Share Memories and Lessons from their Legal Education

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Lauren Quattromani, Jeremy Ben-David & Benjamin Wolkov

Nestled among the art-covered walls of Miami's Wynwood neighborhood, a unique law firm resides. Founded in early 2016, AXS Law Group stands out from the traditional law firms as one where the lawyers "are not tethered to [their] chairs and desks." It is a firm where the lawyers are also entrepreneurs, making them uniquely situated to handle the needs of the modern business law consumer.

When setting out to form this new type of firm, the founders focused on the type of firm culture that they wanted to adopt. According to co-founder and Miami Law alumnus Ben Wolkov, J.D. '00, AXS Law Group was formed "with a view to creating a different law firm experience." Along with co-founders Jeremy Ben-David, J.D. '06, and Jeff Gutchess, Wolkov was interested in creating a law firm that would reject the "hierarchical and bureaucratic environments" of many traditional law firms. Ben-David, a 2006 alumnus, believed that hiring great attorneys was only half of the equation. He emphasized that the firm's lawyers needed to be "people we enjoy working with." Additionally, it was important for the firm to "provide flexibility and the ability for our attorneys to enjoy their lives while still working hard."

A total of three attorneys at the ten-lawyer firm got their start at Miami Law. Along with alumni Wolkov and Ben-David, international transactional attorney Lauren Quattromani graduated in 2013. The trio's reasons for attending Miami Law are diverse, from Wolkov's desire to study international and comparative law in Miami to Quattromani's interest in extending her great experience as an undergraduate at the University of Miami. For Ben-David, coming to Miami from his New York upbringing and Michigan education provided "the best combination of legal curriculum, city life but with a beautiful campus, international opportunities, and of course, sun!"

While at Miami Law, Wolkov was on the [University of Miami Law Review](#), [Charles Papy, Jr., Moot Court Board](#), and served as a Dean's Fellow for the [Academic Achievement Program](#). "The camaraderie has stayed with me," he said. "I run into my classmates who were involved in the same activities, and there is a genuine sense and feeling that we shared a formative experience."

Quattromani, during her time at Miami Law, obtained the Dean's Certificate of Achievement for Outstanding Academic Performance in Legal Communication & Research and received recognition in Forbes for contributing to the design of an app for the promotion and advancement of women in the legal field. Additionally, she took part in [LawWithoutWalls](#), a school program that "brings international students together to work on a project that incorporates law, business and technology." She credits the program with teaching her how to "overcome language and scheduling barriers and working towards a common goal with individuals of various backgrounds," skills that she uses on a daily basis in her career.

Ben-David said his "best memories all revolve around the great friendships I made." He explains that "developing great relationships with classmates (who have become some of my closest friends today) made the [law school] process a whole lot more enjoyable and easier."

There were many individuals at UM that the AXS attorneys remember with fond memories. Wolkov recounts that the most influential mentors during his time at UM were [Marni Lennon](#) and Joanne Koren and Professors John Gaubatz, [Keith Rosenn](#), and [Marc Fajer](#). "They each provided essential mentorship and guidance," he said. Ben-David still remembers [Assistant Dean William VanderWyden's](#) advice on "treating everyone fairly and with respect, [because] classmates today will be colleagues, co-workers, and adversaries in practice tomorrow." He also credits [Professors Lili Levi](#) and [Ricardo Bascuas](#) with positively influencing him while at UM.

Both Wolkov and Ben-David knew that they wanted to become transactional attorneys when they started at Miami Law. Wolkov said that "the resources [to become a cross-border transactional attorney] were all there at UM Law." For Ben-David, UM provided the opportunity to explore different practice areas within transactional law, such as sports and entertainment law, real estate law, intellectual property law, and corporate law. Quattromani, on the other hand, started law school unsure of what she wanted to practice. However, her internship at a boutique corporate firm after her 1L year ignited her

interest in international corporate transactions. Quattromani recommends to “surround yourself with people you like and respect in a field you are interested in.” She credits the passion she brings to her work to the AXS office environment and the energy that everyone at the firm promotes in their practice.

When asked about their takeaways and lessons from their law school experiences, each attorney offers a unique perspective. Wolkov learned that “even in a competitive environment, it is important to be gracious, kind and respectful” and in your career, you should be “intellectually tough but interpersonally soft.” Both Ben-David and Quattromani stress the importance of moving forward with determination and perseverance when there are unexpected obstacles. “Enjoy and appreciate the journey, not just the destination,” advises Ben-David. “You are always going to have setbacks,” Quattromani explains, but “don’t let these setbacks eat away at you; rather, learn from your mistakes so you don’t make them again and move on.”

There is no doubt that their legal education has had a lasting impact on these attorneys. It is clear that they apply the lessons they learned - ones of determination, perseverance, and respect - to their work every day. Earlier on in their careers, Wolkov and Ben-David faced obstacles when it came to finding the right environment to practice law. Ben-David “always struggled with work/life balance and the typical bureaucracy found at most firms,” whereas finding “a less hierarchical and bureaucratic environment” was a challenge for Wolkov. Quattromani echoes Ben-David’s sentiments regarding the challenges of finding the right work/life balance. “Sometimes you need to put the laptop down and be okay with taking a break to keep your sanity and live your life. Mastering a healthy work/life balance will also result in being a generally happier person, and this can only reflect positively in your work,” she explains.

After reflecting on their lessons learned at UM, it is no surprise that this attorney trio follow profound pieces of wisdom in their lives. Quattromani adopts screenwriter Cameron Crowe’s advice that “every passing minute is another chance to turn it all around.” Ben-David’s favorite motto is to “get comfortable being uncomfortable.” Being outside his comfort zone, Ben-David explains, helps him stay focused while advancing his goals. For Wolkov, a passage from the Jewish ethical literature, The Ethics of the Fathers, keeps him attuned to the experience of living rather than just the outcome. “You are not obligated to complete the task, but you are not free to withdraw from it.”

With less than two years under its belt, AXS Law Group has been quite successful. They currently have dozens of active litigation matters and approximately a hundred transactional matters pending. The firm has previously represented clients in “a confidential arbitration, a trade secrets defense case, and plaintiff’s side contingency cases.” The trio is settling into their new Wynwood office, where business clients are being assisted in a broad array of legal areas.

Wolkov’s practice focuses on corporate counseling and domestic and international transactions, with a primary focus on business formation, business growth, mergers, acquisitions and divestitures, venture capital investments and financings, and joint ventures and strategic alliances. Ben-David’s expertise is in real estate and corporate transactions. He has represented companies, from start-ups to large multi-national companies, through all aspects of a business’ life cycle. Quattromani’s practice includes general corporate matters, domestic and cross-border mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures, debt and equity investments and venture capital investments in a broad range of industries.

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