



Member Spotlight

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On this page we share interviews by Board Member and Labor & Employment Law Committee Co-chair Tejash V. Sanchala, Esq. with WCBA members about their experiences and insights. The articles were originally published in the *Member Spotlight* column in the WCBA's *Westchester Lawyer* magazine. We hope you are inspired by their stories!

Tejash welcomes your comments and suggestions for future columns. He can be reached [here](#).



Jacob Amir, Esq.

My current job and practice area are: Associate with Smith Buss & Jacobs, LLP, practicing in commercial, real estate, construction and municipal litigation, and general business, real estate and land use transactions.

How I became a litigation attorney in Westchester County: I was working of counsel with a former law school colleague in Manhattan when a position opened in the Litigation Bureau of the Westchester County Attorney's Office. We had recently moved to Westchester and I was tired of the commute. That was in 2003, and I've been practicing in litigation (and not commuting more than 13 minutes!) ever since.

One of my favorite legal success stories: A client, who owned a mixed-use property with multiple residential units, was being sued by his former partner, who claimed a contract and subsequent deed which contained the partner's signatures were forged. Both men were of Jordanian descent, and the partner, who was an elderly gentleman, had signed his name using both English and Arabic lettering. I could read and speak Hebrew (my family being Israeli) but not Arabic. Because the elderly partner understood English but had a hearing problem, his attorney let me sit next to his client at his deposition and yell my questions into his ear. This made for great entertainment to onlookers passing the conference room. At the bench trial, I used the Arab alphabet to discredit plaintiff's forensic expert, who revealed that he had no knowledge or clue about the lettering for which he provided his analysis. We prevailed at trial and the client

affectionately hugged me in appreciation for saving the valuable property he intended to leave in trust to his children.

If I were not practicing law I would be: A high school history teacher. I teach at Pace University's Paralegal Studies Program and my wife is a public school teacher. Except that I would dress up in character to keep my students interested in our discussions.

People may be surprised to learn: I write satire and spoof on politics and law for family and friends, and started a blog at bluntcounsel.com to share mock information for those who enjoy apolitical cynicism. Admittedly, it's hard to out-spoof what's going in Washington D.C. these days but if anyone wants to get on my email list (I'll renew the blog in due time), you can email me.

The best thing I did to improve marketing my practice and me: This is radical and recent—moving law firms. In order to grow professionally and financially, and to satisfy personal concerns, I had to seriously consider my career going forward. Fortunately, it was the right time, at the right place, for all the right reasons. Without diminishing my enjoyment working with the attorneys in my old firm, my new colleagues at Smith Buss & Jacobs, LLP, and our group with Robert Spolzino, Joanna Topping and Edward Smith, are terrific company.

What I splurge on: Not much, with the exception of maybe birthday gifts or an anniversary gift, which my wife need not remind me is mid-November.

The best hour of my day is: Early morning, usually 5:30–6:00 AM when the house is quiet. In a twisted sort of way, I actually enjoy my wife and I running around Sundays engaged in some madhouse of my three kids' activities. Love watching them!

Favorite meal: Whatever we are having Friday evening—family dinner is sacred. Otherwise, nearly anything Middle Eastern with a side of babaganoush.

My favorite vacation was: Any family trip, including what has become an annual winter gathering with my parents, three brothers and their families, where all 11 cousins enjoy each others' company. But this past summer while the kids were away at camp, Quebec City with my wife (and meeting up with friends) rejuvenated our youthful spirit (until, of course, the kids came back).

Three things I can't live without: Materially speaking, a charged cellphone, a reliable news source and ice cream.

Best advice I ever got: "The future shall set you free" or a variation on that theme. Basically, you cannot change the past, so learn from it but don't live in it.

My advice to new lawyers: Don't be afraid to ask questions, especially to court staff whose insight can save you from much embarrassment.

Last time I was out of my comfort zone: Anytime I have to dance at a celebration. Which is not too often, but often enough.

One of my future ambitions is to: Finish the novel I've started about a court-appointed guardian who uncovers an unsolved murder involving a senior partner, a judge and an incapacitated client.

My favorite part of being involved with the WCBA: The opportunity to maintain professional relationships even with those who may be our adversaries.