

Interview Assessment #1

Name of Professional: Rebecca Armstrong

Profession/Title: Family and Divorce Lawyer, Shareholder

Business/Company Name: KoonsFuller Family Law

Date of Interview: Thursday, September 21st

Assessment:

My first informational interview was with Rebecca Armstrong, a Family and Divorce Lawyer with KoonsFuller. From the interview, I really aimed to gain just a basic knowledge of how to interact with lawyers. Up until that point, I really hadn't spoken with professionals in their place of work much, and so I was incredibly nervous and mostly wanted the interview to help me get used to speaking to adults in their place of business. Originally I had intended to pursue nonprofit law, but I still wanted to interview with a variety of different attorneys, and I was really excited to talk with Ms. Armstrong. An additional perspective I wanted to gain was how working in a larger firm compared to a solo, more private practice. I knew that I would be interviewing with some people in solo practices in the coming weeks, and I wanted to see how KoonsFuller compared with that.

From the interview, I learned the basics of what it's like being a divorce lawyer. I found out that often there is a lot of overlap with therapists when working with people handling a breakup, and that you have to work to find that balance between friendly and compassionate, while still remaining professional. I also learned how it can be really hard to be a divorce lawyer, because sometimes it seems like you are always on call with clients always wanting to reach out and talk to you. With this information, I seriously am more so considering pursuing divorce law this year. Another topic that I'm very interested in therapy and even though I understand that therapists and lawyers are two completely different jobs, I feel like my compassion and desire to work with people would really help the emotional sensitivity divorce lawyers like Ms. Armstrong have,

while still being able to have a rather structured job that takes a strong work ethic and good skills reading and writing.

In addition to this, I also learned that it's becoming increasingly harder to find jobs as lawyers. There are always more law school graduates than new attorney positions open, which I had already learned from previous Research Assessments, but hearing Ms. Armstrong talk about it put it in a more relevant context for me. Ms. Armstrong in particular had some time in limbo before getting her first job as an attorney, and it wasn't even in divorce law. In the beginning, she didn't want to get into a profession that dealt so heavily in conjunction with people's emotions, but said that she ended up really liking it. It was so relatable when she said this, because truthfully, I echo a lot of these same concerns about focusing on divorce and family law this year. It was nice to hear that she felt this way at first to, and makes me think that it could be a good path for me to take this year in ISM.

Overall, I really enjoyed my interview with Ms. Armstrong. I thought she seemed incredibly smart and capable, while still really friendly and easy to talk to on my first interview. I liked the mid-sized firm she worked at, and I will certainly have to take that into consideration with who I chose to interview with from here on out, because I feel like I would get a lot more out of finding a mentor that works with other people than in a solo practice, completely independent with one assistant. I still wonder what the biggest differences between family and divorce law and my other considered topic, immigration or nonprofit law, are, besides the obvious difference in subject matter, but as a whole my first interview went really well and made me incredibly excited about the year to come and where my ISM journey will go over the next few months.