



AMERICAN  
BANKRUPTCY  
INSTITUTE

## 2022 Consumer Practice Extravaganza

### **Non-Linear Law Career Paths**

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## WELL-BEING




Which is your reality?





AMERICAN  
BANKRUPTCY  
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CONSUMER  
PRACTICE  
EXTRAVAGANZA



It was a lightbulb moment when the ABA and our profession as a whole stopped ignoring the fact that we cannot be effective lawyers if we are constantly pushed to the brink of no return.

We **MUST** comply with Rule 1.1 by being competent and the first step is to keep our well-being in check.



## ABA TASK FORCE ON WELL-BEING

The National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being's [2017 report](#) shined a spotlight on evidence that too many lawyers face mental health and substance use disorders or otherwise aren't thriving. Wanting to support the effort to catalyze positive change, American Bar Association President Hilarie Bass formed a Presidential Working Group to Advance Well-Being in the Legal Profession in September 2017. Its focus is on helping legal employers support healthy work environments, which are critical for lawyer wellness. Research shows that if workplace cultures support well-being, lawyers will be better able to make good choices that allow them to thrive and be their best for clients, colleagues, and work organizations.



**In 2020:**

45,979 people  
died by suicide  
in the United States.

That is 1 death  
every 11 minutes.

- ➔ 12.2 million adults seriously thought about suicide
- ➔ 3.2 million adults made a plan
- ➔ 1.2 million adults attempted suicide

Per CDC



**Lawyers are 3.6 times more  
likely to suffer from  
depression than non-lawyers.**

Krill, Patrick R. JD, LL.M.; Johnson, Ryan MA; Albert, Linda MSSW. The Prevalence of Substance Use and Other Mental Health Concerns Among American Attorneys. Journal of Addiction Medicine: January/February 2016 - Volume 10 - Issue 1 - p 46-52  
doi: 10.1097/ADM.0000000000000182



When focusing solely on the volume and frequency of alcohol consumed, more than 1 in 3 practicing attorneys are problem drinkers, the study found.

Krill, Patrick R. JD, LL.M.; Johnson, Ryan MA; Albert, Linda MSSW. The Prevalence of Substance Use and Other Mental Health Concerns Among American Attorneys. *Journal of Addiction Medicine*: January/February 2016 - Volume 10 - Issue 1 - p 46-52  
doi: 10.1097/ADM.0000000000000182

## About Monica

Monica Blacker spent 22 years practicing as a business workout and reorganization attorney. During her climb to partner in an international law firm, she observed many pitfalls and obstacles that can get in a people's way and, ultimately, cause them to derail or leave the job. Armed with personal experiences, stories, and anecdotes from many of her colleagues, Monica has become a passionate advocate for minorities and women and a sought-after international speaker on topics designed to make the road smoother. She is known for providing practical tips and immediate action steps.

Monica Blacker is Founder of BAX Advisors, LLC., a firm focused on helping women advance in their careers. In addition to supporting professional growth, BAX also helps organizations design and/or refresh their current resource groups' initiatives.



## Fear and Your Path

- What would you do if you weren't afraid?
- How is fear limiting your success?
- Imposter Syndrome and that "little voice in your head"
- Instead, let's live a big life!



## Ways to Make the Path Easier:

### Find a sponsor

- An individual with authority within your organization who will advocate for you and intentionally use their influence to help you advance
- Sponsor's efforts should result in high performance and loyalty from the sponsee
- Your brand and your sponsor's brand become linked



# What Else Helps Smooth the Path?

## Mentors

- Mentors do not have to be, and often are, outside of your organization 'pontoonfun622014@gmail.com'
- Someone with experience who is willing to support and assist you
- Someone you can bounce ideas/issues off
- Someone who raises your confidence level and provides empathy
- Very little, if anything, is expected in return
- Paying mentorship forward helps to build your brand and confidence



## About Kristina

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KRISTINA is a shareholder and restructuring attorney at Iowa's largest law firm, Nyemaster Goode. Her experience spans such industries as agriculture, retail, commercial real estate, bioenergy, health care, construction, and manufacturing. She advocates for secured and unsecured creditors in a variety of contexts, including cases under chapters 7, 11 and 12 of the Bankruptcy Code, out-of-court workouts, acquisitions, state court actions and receiverships. She is a nationally-known speaker and member of a number of esteemed boards and organizations such as the American Bankruptcy College, the ABI, the Iowa State Judicial Nomination Commission and CREW Iowa.

In addition to her legal practice, Kristina is a combat-experienced and decorated U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel. She is an Honor Graduate from the Iowa Military Academy and U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. She recently retired after serving nearly 25 years as an enlisted Soldier, commander and planner for state, national and international operations.





## STANGER'S 5 PRINCIPLES OF BALANCE (MY 5 P's)

1. Pace
2. Partner
3. Prioritize
4. Plan
5. Pray

\*\*Runners up: Pinterest, Pants, Play (date nights)



### 1. PACE

- Redefine "Success" to you.
  - Education
  - Firm partner track
  - Kids
  - Fitness
  - Supporting my partner when he needed it
- No vs. "Not yet" or "Not right now."
- Track your day/Sleep





## 2. PARTNER

- It's a team effort. Build a NETWORK and show gratitude to your team!
  - Control v. reliance and trusting others
- Who is your Battle Buddy? Who is your Ride or Die? (works both ways – see *pace*)
- Who is your Mentor?
- Who is your Champion?
- Having a cleaning lady is an acceptable “partner”



## 3. PRIORITIZE

- What makes you who you are?
- What makes you the happiest you?
- What needs to be done NOW vs. phased in or later
  
- Some days I'm a great Mom, Soldier, or Lawyer. If I am lower at one of those today, hopefully I will be better tomorrow.  
*Today? Soldiering and Mentoring – not so much “momming” and lawyering.*



## 4. PLAN

- Time Management \*
- Be Deliberate
- Make Goals \*
- Make the Tough Choices – and don't apologize for them



## 5. PRAY

- I pray. I am Catholic. I ask for patience, guidance, wisdom, to kick ass, to be my best and for forgiveness when I fall short.
  - And I have failed. I am one person. I try my best.
  - A Ranger friend taught me that sometimes I need to just “Take a knee, face out, drink water.” Then →back on the march, the team is counting on you!
- Whatever “Pray” may mean to you.
- Try the term “Synchrony” or “Harmony” or “Satisfaction” instead of “Balance.”



Questions.  
BE WELL.

# Faculty

**Monica Blacker** is the founder of BAX Advisors, LLC., a firm focused on helping women and minorities advance in their careers, and of Force 10 Partners in Dallas. She also serves on several boards advising them on various matters ranging from restructuring to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging initiatives. Force 10 Partners is a financial advisory firm focused on assisting parties in reorganizations and restructurings. She serves in fiduciary roles, including CRO, independent director and trustee, and serves on several boards. Ms. Blacker spent 22 years practicing as a business workout and reorganization attorney. During her climb to partner in an international law firm, she observed many pitfalls and obstacles that can get in the way and, ultimately, cause women and minorities to derail or leave their jobs. Armed with personal experiences, stories and anecdotes from many of her colleagues, Ms. Blacker has become a passionate advocate for minorities and women and a speaker on topics designed to make the road smoother. She is a sought-after international speaker, providing practical tips and immediate action steps. Ms. Blacker received her B.B.A. in marketing from James Madison University in 1993 and her J.D. in 1996 from Southern Methodist University Law School.

**Kristina M. Stanger** is an attorney and shareholder with Nyemaster Goode, P.C. in Des Moines, Iowa, the state's largest firm, and focuses her practice on creditors' rights and bankruptcy. Her experience spans such industries as agriculture, retail, commercial real estate, bioenergy, health care, construction and manufacturing. Ms. Stanger advocates for secured and unsecured creditors in a variety of contexts, including cases under chapters 7, 11 and 12 of the Bankruptcy Code, out-of-court workouts, acquisitions, state court actions and receiverships. She is a nationally known speaker and member of a number of esteemed boards and organizations, such as the American Bankruptcy College, ABI, the Iowa State Judicial Nomination Commission and CREW Iowa. In addition to her legal practice, Ms. Stanger is a combat-experienced and decorated U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel. She recently retired after serving more nearly 25 years as an enlisted soldier, commander and planner for state, national and international operations. Ms. Stanger was a member of the 2016 Next Generation Class for the National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges (NCBJ), is a 2018 ABI "40 Under 40" honoree, and chairs IWIRC's Midwest Network. She is admitted to practice in all state, federal and bankruptcy courts in Iowa and the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals. Following law school, she interned for Hon. Ronald E. Longstaff of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Iowa and clerked for the Iowa Academy of Trial Lawyers U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in 2014. Ms. Stanger graduated with distinguished honors from the 185th Military Regional Training Institute's Officer Candidate School in 2000, received her B.A. *magna cum laude* from Central College the same year, and received her J.D. with high honors from Drake University in 2006, where she was a member of the Order of the Coif, worked on the *Drake Law Review* and was active in its moot court program.