

FOREWORD

This volume is a work of collective mentoring. It is the culmination of dozens of practicing tax lawyers having joined toward the care and maintenance of the profession by fostering its future.

The contributors to *Careers in Tax Law*, almost all of them members of the American Bar Association Section of Taxation, cut a wide categorical swath. They are geographically and demographically diverse. They represent almost every niche and aspect of the law, including several alternatives to traditional practice formats. They encompass every experience level.

More to the point, these contributors have absorbed the common lessons of work and career and then some. Those lessons are what they share here, each from her or his unique perspective, each contributor adding facets to the whole.

Besides experience and good judgment, time is a working professional's only resource. More than 70 practicing tax lawyers have given it freely here.



Careers is organized thematically but with a caveat. Any number of these essays would have been equally at home in more than one chapter. It follows that the structure is one of blending rather than bright lines.

It hardly could be otherwise. Every career is a continuum. And while details of circumstance differ, commonalities dominate to a remarkable degree. These essays prove it.

No hard and fast guidelines were issued to contributors. Rather, the simple suggestion was to combine autobiography and anecdote with whatever words of wisdom emanate therefrom. As a result, these essays are conversations—the responsive half of so many dialogues in which the questions are implicit: How did you decide on tax as a practice specialty? How did your career progress from college or law school to where you are today? What lessons have you absorbed along the way?

What might you have done differently had you known what you know now?

And not to be overlooked: What is it that you really do? On a day-to-day basis how do you actually function as a tax lawyer? Does it differ from what you expected? Do you find intellectual fulfillment? Fulfillment of purpose? If you moved away from a traditional practice format, why and to do what?

The contributors address these and other questions with a refreshing, sometimes remarkable candor. The bottom line is quickly apparent: these are not cardboard cutouts, these are real working professionals; what they share here are not abstractions, they are first-hand experiences, often hard-won at that.

In short, *Careers* is so many practicing lawyers going straight to the heart of the matter: “Here’s what I know, and here’s how I learned it.”

That’s what mentoring is.



There’s credit to go around for *Careers* having become a reality.

Lou Mezzullo, the Tax Section’s Vice Chair for Publications, brought the idea to the table in early 2008. Two ABA staff members at the Tax Section’s Washington, D.C., offices—Anne Dunn, Director, Publishing & Program Development, and Andrea Amato, Assistant Staff Director, Publishing—were wonderfully consistent in their enthusiasm and support. Robb Longman and Matt Sontag of the Section’s Young Lawyers Forum gave time and editorial assistance.

Of course a heartfelt thanks goes to each of the contributors whose altruism and inspiration are so evident here. Together they put the lie to the myth that each generation no sooner moves into the ranks than pulls the ladder up behind. They themselves, each of them, were the beneficiaries of mentoring. In turn they now extend a hand.

John Gamino
New York University
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