Ford W. Harmon is an associate at Maddrey PLLC, a boutique business law firm in Dallas, Texas. Maddrey PLLC handles both transactional and litigation matters. When it comes to litigation, the firm represents clients on both the plaintiff and defense side of the docket. On the transactional side, the firm conducts work in numerous practice areas including general business law, art law, entrepreneur and startup law, and estate planning.

Ford practices transactional law for the firm, primarily focusing on startup law, intellectual property, art law, and contracts. He also hosts Maddrey PLLC’s soon-to-be-released podcast—“The Terms of Art”—which features interviews with artists and entrepreneurs followed by discussions amongst attorneys about legal issues relevant to the interviewee’s industry or creative focus.

Where do you work and what do you do?

I am a business lawyer at Maddrey PLLC. Although our firm works with clients in an abundance of industries, we place an emphasis on working with startups/entrepreneurs, artists of all mediums, and other creative businesses and individuals. Our firm commonly serves in a capacity similar to that of external general counsel for many of our clients, who range in size from individual artists and brand new startups to large national and international organizations. Such breadth of legal issues and client size and sophistication allow me to counsel clients on a wide range of transactional matters, such as business planning, structuring, and governance; employment law; copyright and trademark law; art law; internet/tech law; and startup/business law.
What experiences have you had at your firm and what areas of business law do you find most interesting?

Because of the nature of our firm, I am fortunate enough to work on a variety of projects that have allow me to gain experience in a multitude of legal areas. The work I am doing can vary day-to-day and client-to-client, which is one of my favorite parts about my job. With both our startup/entrepreneur clients (especially tech-related startups) and our clients in the art space, I have opportunities to work with amazing creators, brilliant minds, and unbelievable talents on a regular basis.

Startup law and art law are the two specific subsets of business law that I find to be most interesting. Although this may be surprising to some, there often appears to be a lot of overlap in the ways entrepreneurs and artists think and operate. Both groups work towards creating something new; both groups usually have a specific vision for how they are going to reach their goals; and both groups believe in what they are creating. Being an attorney that has the privilege of helping these groups of clients, who have such drive and passion, further their careers or even achieve their dreams makes it easy, fun, and exciting to go into the office every day and dedicate 100% of my effort creating.

Outside of the practice of law, what are you passions? What are your other interests?

I am very passionate about working to protect and assist those who are most vulnerable in our society. This passion led me to become actively involved in the Lawyers Against Domestic Violence Committee and the Aid to the Homeless Committee, both through the Dallas Association of Young Lawyers. I will have the honor of serving as a co-chair on both of those committees in 2018, and I am excited to help continue moving both committees forward.

I also greatly enjoy and have an interest in the arts. As a means of showing my appreciation for the arts, I serve as a volunteer attorney through Texas Accountants and Lawyers for the Arts and serve as a board trustee for a Dallas-based art non-profit called the Writer’s Garret. After years of simply being an admiring observer, I finally started my own art collection in 2017, purchasing several carefully selected works over the course of the year. I hope to continue to slowly grow my collection over the years.

Some of my other main interests and hobbies include seeing live music, hiking, traveling, and writing. I also have a deep fascination with certain topics, including blockchain-related technology, outer space, and behavioral economics and enjoy reading as much as I can about each of these subjects.