

After Ignoring Others' Advice, Gilbert Discovers Enjoyable Legal Career

AMY O. WILLIAMS | *The Daily News*



Memphis Law Talk



Name: Allison T. Gilbert

Position: Member

Company: Harris Shelton Hanover Walsh PLLC

Basics: Gilbert focuses her practice in the areas of commercial and industrial real estate.

"I planned to attend graduate school at the University of Tennessee in English, but my application was deferred for a year and I moved back home to Memphis. ... Everyone told me that no matter what I decide, do not go to law school, and so I began law school the following fall."

- Allison T. Gilbert

Allison T. Gilbert likes to go against the grain.

When she was searching for a job after college and without a specific career in mind, the people around her advised not to go to law school. So that was exactly what Gilbert did. Almost 10 years later, Gilbert is now a member at Harris Shelton Hanover Walsh PLLC. She focuses her practice in the areas of commercial and industrial real estate.

Gilbert is a 1998 graduate of the University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law. She received her undergraduate degree in English with honors in 1994 from the University of Tennessee. She is a member of the Memphis, Tennessee and American Bar associations and the Association of Women Attorneys.

She also is vice president of the board of directors of the Ronald McDonald House of Memphis.

Q: What made you want to study law?

A: Unemployment. Kidding, actually. I planned to attend graduate school at the University of Tennessee in English, but my application was deferred for a year and I moved back home to Memphis. I tried to substitute teach, but realized I would have to go back to school to get my teacher's certificate. I was working then at Mid-America Apartment Communities, trying to figure out what to do next. Everyone told me that no

matter what I decide, do not go to law school, and so I began law school the following fall.

Q: Was it something you had ever considered?

A: I guess I considered it, but I really wanted to become an English professor. However, once I began law school, I realized how much I enjoyed it.

Q: Where are you from?

A: Originally, northern Virginia, (Washington) D.C. area, but my family moved here when I was in junior high, so I call Memphis home.

Q: What brought you to Harris Shelton?

A: I followed my mentor to Harris Shelton. I started practicing law at another firm, but came to Harris Shelton with Phil Kaminsky. I feel so fortunate that he brought me with him on his move. I trusted his judgment and it did not steer me wrong. It has been a great experience and really helped me develop my practice.

Q: What has been your biggest challenge so far?

A: There have been so many, but two really stand out. The first has been developing a client base. Memphis has so many fantastic lawyers, and so it has been a challenge to find my niche and really go after clients. The second has been balancing, or should I say separating, my career with my personal and family life.

Q: What is the best part about your job?

A: My clients and peers. Being a transactional attorney, I have been able to develop great relationships with my clients and peers.

Q: What are you most proud of, personally and professionally?

A: I'm most proud of my family. I have been blessed with a fantastic husband, Greg, who is an assistant district attorney, and two beautiful and strong-minded kids, Charlie, age 5, and Mary Grove, age 2.

Professionally, I would have to say that I'm most proud of the fact that I still enjoy what I'm doing, that I could see myself doing this years from now and that I am lucky enough to be surrounded by true role models in our profession.

Q: If you had not become a lawyer, what would you be doing now?

A: I definitely would have become a teacher, though I'm not sure how long that would have lasted.

Q: What are your goals for the future?

A: Educate my children, spend as much time as I can with my family and parents, continue to grow my practice and hopefully never take myself too seriously.

Q: What do you do when you are not working?

A: When I'm not at work or at home, I volunteer with the Ronald McDonald House of Memphis, my other true passion. Otherwise, I try to keep up with my husband on his bicycle and stumble around the tennis court.