

Member Spotlight

Kathy Hatseras

Counsel

U.S. Cellular

In current position for: New Hire

Years in-house: 4 years

Law School: The John Marshall Law School, Chicago

Undergrad: University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana (BA in Economics)

The best thing about my current job is:

Having the opportunity to review and negotiate all types of vendor and service provider agreements of varying complexities and developing skills and experience that I can transfer between industries. I am excited about joining U.S. Cellular, the fifth-largest wireless carrier in the United States. Before joining U.S. Cellular, I worked at Kemper Corporation, one of the nation's leading insurers where I gained invaluable experience and had the opportunity to work with a super team of attorneys and business stakeholders. I enjoy the fast-paced and collaborative environment working with stakeholders to provide legal services.

A valuable lesson I learned from my recent job switch is:

The decision to switch jobs and industries really made me take a few minutes to reflect on the personal and professional growth which I achieved; the good friends I made; the great mentors that I had along the way; and, how appreciative I am for all those experiences. I guess the lesson learned is to always take a moment each day to say thank you, because there is something to be thankful for every day.

My proudest accomplishment as an in-house lawyer is:

Being able to effectively work with stakeholders to negotiate agreements and achieve favorable outcomes for my client and employer. The best part is when an issue arises over a vendor relationship, and you can point to a provision in a contract that you drafted and be able to say to your client that it is a non-issue and problem solved.

My most pivotal career move was:

There were two pivotal career moves: leaving public service at the Office of the Cook County State's Attorney to explore other career opportunities and becoming a parent. Leaving the State's Attorney's Office to pursue other opportunities led me to in-house counsel work. Becoming a parent in between presented some new challenges and sacrifices in getting to where I am at today; it also forced me to better understand the meaning of work-life balance.

Advice I would give to new lawyers, in-house or otherwise:

Be an advisor, not just a lawyer. Listen to your clients, ask questions, understand their business, focus on problem-solving and always put the client first; it's all about providing excellent legal service and customer service.

Most valuable life lesson that I still apply today:

Make everything a learning experience. I always try to reflect on how and what I can learn from any experience or interaction at the professional and personal levels that will help me make better decisions and do things better. It is amazing how many of these opportunities present themselves every day, either on a large scale or a small scale.

Best thing about ACC's Chicago Chapter is:

The ACC Chicago Chapter offers many opportunities to get professionally and socially involved and to connect with the legal and non-legal communities.

My favorite pro bono or volunteer activities are:

I am an active ACC Chicago volunteer serving on the Program and Publicity Committees including the subcommittee that organized the first all-day Chicago Summit which was a huge success with over 180 in-house counsel in attendance. I also volunteer on various committees at the Union League Club of Chicago, including the Investment Committee of the Union League Boys and Girls Clubs and the Gender Equality subcommittee of the Public Affairs Committee.

If I were not practicing law, I would probably be:

A photographer and day trader. Photography is a hobby which I have enjoyed for many years. Photography is an outlet for my visual creativity. Trading appeals to me because I think that it is exciting how economic, political and social factors impact the market. I have been pretty good at stock picks, and I have images of working mornings with a cup of coffee in pajamas and a cozy bathrobe.

When I'm not working, I like to:

Volunteer with ACC Chicago, the Union League Club of Chicago; spending time with my family and friends; going on long walks, exercising; and, taking photographs, of course.

My favorite vacation spots:

Greece and Southwest Michigan. Greece is a beautiful country with an amazing history, culture, topography and beaches. There are always new areas to explore. For quick getaways, I love the lakeshore, sunsets and small towns of Michigan. Also, it is great to visit family and friends in both locations which make all the difference.

What book are you currently reading?

"Mindset" by Carol S. Dweck

What's currently on your music playlist?

Robert Plant's "Carry Fire"

People may be surprised to learn that I:

Was born in Kostarazi, a small village in Macedonia, Greece with a rich history where the only phone was at the local coffee shop. Today, Kostarazi has phones, indoor plumbing, paved roads, electricity, and is a thriving village by Greek standards. Those were really simple and good times.