

Member Spotlight

Reggie Parks

Senior Counsel

Cushman & Wakefield

Chicago, IL

Current position since: 2014

Years in-house: 1.5

Law School: DePaul University, Chicago

Undergrad: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, English Major

Worst job I ever had:

I sold vacuum cleaners door-to-door one summer in college. While I wasn't the best salesman, the job taught me how to be persuasive and a quick thinker. I also learned that there is still an opportunity after "No".

Best things about my current job:

First, working for a dynamic, growing, global company. Second, having colleagues who are eager to help me in learning our company culture and who routinely offer advice on the best way to navigate our transactions. Last, but not least, no more billable hours.

Most challenging thing about my job:

Again, no more billable hours. By that I mean that I am no longer a revenue producer and no longer at the top of the totem pole inside my organization. It requires adjusting to new paradigm in terms of your perceived value and how you provide and demonstrate value to your organization.

Pivotal career move:

I'd say it occurred even before I finished law school. As a summer associate after my second year, I chose to work on business transactions instead of litigation. I felt knowing how to structure deals and having a transactional background would assist me in better understanding the client's business and mitigating risk. This approach has worked well for me and has been invaluable in my current position.

Advice I would give to lawyers new to in-house:

Take ownership of your career. For new lawyers, starting out used to be like an apprenticeship, where you were formally taught how to be a lawyer. But I don't think law firms and corporations devote the same resources as before in training you. A lawyer new to practice – or new to in-house practice – needs to embrace that and take more responsibility for his or her own development. Learning to do that is a good thing.

Words of wisdom I try to keep in mind:

Something my mother taught me: "It's not what you do, but how you do it."

What I like most about the ACC Chicago Chapter:

The multitude of events and CLE opportunities.

If I were not practicing law:

I'd want to be a movie director or screenwriter. I love movies and telling stories, and I like to write, so I think it would make sense to combine those passions. I would want to be *behind* the camera, not in front of it.

On that note, what is your all-time favorite movie:

The Blues Brothers. I always get a kick out of seeing Chicago on the big screen. This movie is of particular interest as it illustrates how the landscape of the city has changed over the years...except City Hall, which looks exactly the same

My favorite vacation spot:

Cabo. Good golf, good food, good tequila.

On my playlist:

Gregory Porter. Aloe Blacc. And anything from the 90's.

Book I am currently reading:

"Opportunity Has No Season", which explores how some of the biggest companies were started during bad economic times.

People may be surprised to learn...

That I am probably the most boring person they may know.