

Member Spotlight

Angela Wu

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Chicago, IL

Current position since: 2015 (as VP)

Years in-house: 15 years

Law School: Northern Illinois University College of Law

Undergrad: University of Illinois, BS in Business Administration

Best thing about my current job:

Tough question because there are a lot of great things about this job, but if I had to pick, I would say the best things are the number of interesting people I've had the opportunity to meet and the variety of issues and topics (e.g., bankruptcy, Dodd-Frank Act, 4th Amendment, tax issues, e-discovery) I've had the chance to work on and learn about.

What I've accomplished as an in-house lawyer of which I'm most proud:

Learning and developing my knowledge in the bank regulatory space early on in my legal career at the Reserve Bank. Up until that point, I had had no background in this practice area, having spent the majority of my early years focused on contract law (reviewing, drafting and negotiating). However, when a couple of the bank regulatory attorneys left the Reserve Bank for other opportunities, I willingly stepped up and worked hard to try and master a new legal practice area – which was both a valuable contribution to my legal department as well as the supervision and regulation area of the Bank that I helped support. Branching into a new area was both exciting and somewhat intimidating. But I'm glad I did it – I find the work interesting and it opened up other opportunities that I might not have had.

Most challenging thing about my current job:

I really think the answer depends on the particular point in my career. At this particular point, I would have to say email management. Obviously, email use and volume have increased dramatically over the years. One impact of that is that many business units utilize it as the method of choice for requesting legal assistance from Reserve Bank attorneys. It has also gradually increased business units' expectations for attorney response times. That combination has made email management a consistent challenge – from prioritizing, reviewing, and analyzing individual matters to providing thoughtful, meaningful responses while also meeting timeline expectations of the requesting business unit.

My most pivotal career move was:

when I left my first legal job at the City of Chicago, where I practiced mostly contracts law, to take the job at the Reserve Bank. While it helped me develop legal skills that serve as a foundation to many other legal topics, it was also a position with a narrow concentration. When the opportunity at the Reserve Bank came up, I really felt I needed to explore other practice areas not only to try other things, but also to become a more effective attorney. It was such a difficult choice in many ways because of the relationships I had built, but I think I would've always wondered "what if" if I had passed up the opportunity.

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

Don't hesitate to ask questions, especially as a new lawyer – it helps you in so many different ways. Beyond the knowledge you might gain, it shows you're engaged or sometimes even helps you figure out if you're focusing on the right issues. Volunteer to work on assignments or projects, especially as a new lawyer. This exposes you to different types of legal issues, gives you a chance to work with different people, and brings a broader perspective to how you might view an issue. And who knows, it might even lead to opportunities you didn't expect!

Most valuable life lesson that I still apply today is:

There are two that particularly resonate with me. Be prepared – it's always a good idea to spend some time to gather your thoughts and prepare (even for a few minutes) before going into a meeting, even if you think you can "wing it." And – second, if it's worth doing, it's worth doing well. For example, as I get further along in my career, there are times when I'm pressed for time and I sometimes think I don't have to proof something as carefully, or that I can skim a document because I know what to look for. That approach has occasionally tripped me up and I've had to back-track to fix something I overlooked or review the document anyway.

The worst job I ever had was:

answering phones at a small family-owned travel agency part-time on Saturdays when I was in high school and on and off in college. Calls hardly ever came in, customers rarely showed up and I was the only person there. Not only was I bored to tears, but I had to spend several Saturdays there, of all days!

Best thing about ACC membership is:

that it provides a variety of CLE and other learning opportunities, on a variety of topics through many formats – like newsletters, webinars, updates and in-person CLE seminars.

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

the owner of a tea & coffee shop (with the signature item being bubble tea).

What is currently on your music playlist:

I have a mix of different things, but some of the favorites on my list include 80s classic rock, some 70s, today's pop music hits, and more mellow artists such as Jim Brickman, Ed Sheeran, Josh Groban and Cecilia Bartoli.

The place I've never been but would most like to visit:

Japan – from pictures, I envision it as a beautiful and peaceful place, with lots of history and greenery. Words like graceful, advanced and cultured come to mind.

People may be surprised to learn that I:

was one of two managers responsible for operating a student credit union one summer when I was in college. It was one of the most enjoyable experiences I've ever had!