

Member Spotlight

Jacquelyne Belcastro

Vice President & General Counsel

Sapa Extrusions Americas

Rosemont, IL

Current position since: 2011

Years in-house: 17

Law School: Northwestern University School of Law, Chicago

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

Post Grad: MBA, Northwestern University Kellogg School of Management

Pivotal career move:

My first in-house position, when I joined CNA Insurance in a transactional role after several years doing primarily commercial litigation in private practice. The advice-giving role was so different... less in a vacuum and more big picture; less detached and more in tune with the client; less risk-averse and more involved in making long-term business decisions.

Best thing about my current job:

I am lucky to be part of a very supportive, collaborative and hard-working leadership team.

Most challenging thing about my current job:

Trying to support – as the only in-house attorney – a busy organization with more than \$2 billion in revenues, about 6500 employees and 25 manufacturing facilities in the Americas... I'm pretty busy. Although we are part of a global organization (based in Oslo, Norway) and are adding global attorneys, for North and South America it's still just me.

Worst job I ever had:

I've learned something valuable from every job and cannot think of any one that was markedly the "worst".

Most valuable life lesson I still apply today:

Check the sources. A high school English teacher always made us look up words we misused or misspelled, rather than just correcting our papers. Early in my career, a litigation partner took the same approach with civil procedure rules. To this day, I don't assume I am doing something the right way just because it has always been done that way, but will check the sources to confirm what they actually say.

Best things about ACC membership:

- 1) The strong platform of practice resources.
- 2) The networking opportunities within the Chicago Chapter and the willingness of fellow in-house counsel to share information.

How I achieve work/life balance:

My husband and daughter help "remind" me about the importance of family time; they keep me grounded.

If I were not practicing law:

I'd want to be in higher education. I have always loved school and the learning environment. If they would pay me to "go to school" every day, I would do it in a heartbeat.

My favorite vacation spot:

Sorrento, Italy... on the Amalfi coast. It's more than just the scenery, the food and the warmth of the people. My mom is from this area and I still have relatives there. I've visited the olive orchard where my uncle grew up, and it was really special taking my twelve year-old daughter there to show her that part of her heritage.

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

Scotland... because of my college days studying English literature. I've been to England, but I want to experience more of the places that spawned and inspired such great literature.

What book are you currently reading?

Black Beauty. (Okay, my *daughter* is actually reading it, but I'm enjoying it with her.)

All time favorite movie:

I never get tired of watching Alfred Hitchcock's *North by Northwest*. The movie is deep on so many levels... story, imagery, and film-making art. And it's a mid-20th century period piece that captures the style and culture of the era.

Even people who know me might be surprised to learn...

that my first car was a fixed-up, super-charged 1972 Camaro that I "shared" with my little brother. (I had it all to myself for the first year because he was only 15 when we bought it.)