

New Member Spotlight: Elizabeth Briand

Interview by Katy Carpenter

Q Where are you from?

A Massachusetts, originally—the greater Boston area. I went to college in Westchester and stayed in New York for law school. I've lived all over the New York area since college and came back to Westchester for work when I was hired at my current firm, Bleakley Platt & Schmidt, LLP in 2014.

Q What do you like about the area of Elder Law?

A There is a lot that I love about this area of the law. I love that Elder Law is intellectually challenging and never boring—things are always changing in this area. I also love that as an Elder Law attorney, I really feel like I've done some good at the end of the day.

Q Where is your favorite place you've traveled to?

A I just got back from Japan last month! It's at the top of my list, especially Kyoto which was spectacular! Another favorite is Glacier National Park in Montana.

Q What's your favorite part about your job?

A On a day-to-day basis, I love working with clients—it's what drives me. I believe you must like working with people to work in this practice area.

Q Tell me about a project or accomplishment that you consider to be the most significant in your career.

A It's hard to pick one particular thing. Every time we obtain a positive result for our clients it feels important. If I'm able to get a successful result for my client, on a Medicaid application for example, that feels significant to me.

Q Have you had any turning points in your life?

A I would say my second year of law school was a turning point. Prior to that year, I had been considering going into Elder Law. During my second year I participated in New York Law School's Elder Law Clinic, took an Elder Law course with Peter Strauss, and became in-



involved in the Elder Law and Special Needs Section. After that year, I knew I wanted to pursue Elder Law as my career after law school.

Q Where do you see yourself in five years?

A I hope to still be practicing in the Elder Law and Special Needs area. At that time I hope I am able to devote some time to doing some pro bono work. I also plan to continue my involvement in the Section.

Q What did you want to be when you were 13?

A A musician. I sang and played the piano, although I've been off track in that regard since law school. Singing was my strength—I sang mostly classical music. I think what pulled me away from pursuing music professionally was my desire to help people in some capacity.

Q Are there hobbies you look forward to on the weekends?

A I love cooking—I'm not an expert, but I enjoy it. I also love yoga and reading. My husband is a library director and I enjoy volunteering at events at his library from time to time.

Q Have you ever been given advice that you remember?

A I've been told on multiple occasions that Elder Law attorneys do not only function as attorneys—we also play the role of therapist and social worker at times. Our clients are often going through stressful, painful life events and we need to approach our practice with this in mind.

Q Do you have any words used to describe yourself?

A Empathetic, which I believe helps me in my practice. Determined, which I believe you need as an attorney regardless of your practice area.

Q Is there anything else you want people to know about you?

A Some people reading this may not know I'm the Chair of our Section's Sponsorship Committee. If you know of businesses that may be interested in sponsoring one of our events, please send them my way!