



Legal Mentor Network Bootcamp

Associates' Best Practices & Relationship Development



Disclaimer

All information, content, and materials contained in this publication/program are for informational purposes only. This publication/program is intended to be a general overview of the subjects discussed and does not create a lawyer-client relationship. Statements and opinions are those of the individual speakers, authors, and participants and do not necessarily reflect the policies or opinions of DLA Piper LLP (US). The information contained in this publication/program is not, and should not be used as, a substitute for legal advice. No reader should act, or refrain from acting, with respect to any particular legal matter on the basis of this publication/program and should seek legal advice from counsel in the relevant jurisdiction. This publication and the program may qualify as “Lawyer Advertising,” requiring notice in some jurisdictions. Prior results do not guarantee a similar outcome. DLA Piper LLP (US) accepts no responsibility for any actions taken or not taken as a result of this publication/program.

Real Estate Partner: Amy B. Carbins

Amy Carbins is an accomplished real estate lawyer, experienced in structuring, negotiating, and executing complex commercial transactions. Known for her careful analysis and emphasis on risk mitigation, she finds practical solutions for her clients' complex problems.

Amy advises lenders and borrowers in construction, bridge, and permanent financings. Her experience includes transactions involving office buildings, hotels and resorts, shopping centers, mixed-use projects, multi-family, senior independent and assisted living communities, and industrial properties.

Amy's finance experience includes multi-jurisdiction/multi-property portfolios, preferred equity and mezzanine debt, CMBS and syndicated debt arrangements, and other structured finance transactions. She also advises clients on leasing and asset management matters for office, retail, and industrial properties, including working with landlords and tenants on headquarters leases, single-tenant buildings, new construction leasing, and representation of landlords owning large, multi-state portfolios.



Amy B. Carbins

Partner, Location Head, Washington, DC Real Estate practice

[LinkedIn](#)

Education

J.D., Lewis & Clark Law School
cum laude

B.A., University of Oregon

Admissions

California

District of Columbia

Finance Partner: Laurie E. Hutchins

Laurie's practice focuses on the representation of financial institutions in all aspects of secured and unsecured debt facilities.

Laurie represents and advises banks and private credit funds in connection with single and multi-lender venture debt, asset-based and cash-flow lending transactions including secured, unsecured, and subordinated mezzanine financings that facilitate runway extension, acquisitions, and cross-border transactions primarily in the technology and life sciences industries.

In addition, Laurie has represented corporations and creditors in financial restructuring matters, with an emphasis on debtor, junior bondholder, and creditors' committee representations in large chapter 11 reorganizations.



Laurie E. Hutchins

Partner, Head of Venture & Growth Lending
(San Diego)

[LinkedIn](#)

Education

J.D., Brooklyn Law School
cum laude

B.A., Political Science, Hofstra University
cum laude

Admissions

California

New York

Restructuring Partner: Jamila Justine Willis

Jamila Justine Willis focuses her practice in the area of financial and corporate restructuring and has extensive experience in complex restructurings across industries.

Jamila represents debtors, distressed investors, sponsors, purchasers of distressed assets, and other interested parties in a wide range of restructuring and insolvency matters, including cases under chapters 11 and 15 of the US Bankruptcy Code and cross-border insolvency proceedings.

In addition, Jamila represents debtors, secured creditors, acquirers, and distressed investors in distressed asset sales and acquisitions, including Uniform Commercial Code Article 9 foreclosure sales and Bankruptcy Code Section 363 sales.

Jamila also advises firm clients in liquidations, corporate wind-downs, bankruptcy litigation, and other bankruptcy-related matters.

Internally, Jamila holds a leadership role as Co-Chair of the Consumer Goods and Retail sector, in addition to being a member of DLA Piper's Policy Committee and serving as Chair of the New York Office Diversity & Inclusion Committee.



Jamila Justine Willis

Partner, Co-Chair, Consumer Goods and Retail
subsector
Chair, New York Office Restructuring group

[LinkedIn](#)

Education

J.D., University of Virginia School of Law

B.A., Communications, Economics
University of Pennsylvania

Admissions

Connecticut

New York

Associates' Best Practices

- ❖ Professionalism
- ❖ Expectations
- ❖ Communication
- ❖ Responsiveness/Timeliness
- ❖ Time Management
- ❖ Work Allocation
- ❖ Research
- ❖ Preparation
- ❖ Effort
- ❖ Meetings
- ❖ Tips and Tricks to Being a Good Associate



Professionalism

- **Be Proactive**
- **Be Present**
- **Be on Time**
 - This is a business where your clients and colleagues rely on you. Preparation, allocation of time, and being present shows the leadership that you are reliable and capable of producing valuable work.
- **Ask Questions**
 - Upon receiving an assignment, be sure to ask questions to understand what your role will be. When following up, make sure that you have exhausted all options before going to the supervising attorney or partner.
 - Ask other associates, ask for precedent, use Google, and research the firm's documents.

Expectations

- Work Product
- Communicate that you received direction and the time frame it will take you to complete assignments
- Understand what the expected deadline is and how this fits into the larger matter's timeline
- Ways to let your supervising attorneys or partners know your expected time frame:
 - “I have this and will get right to it”
 - “I have this but will not be able to turn to it until later today”
 - “I can turn to this tonight or tomorrow”
 - “I am at capacity”

Communication

- **Internal**

- Even if there is a sense of being less formal, professionalism remains key, and formal communication is required
- Be thoughtful when sending emails, as they can sometimes be perceived in the wrong tone since they're electronic and not face-to-face or over the phone
- Choose phone calls or face-to-face communication over email when appropriate
- Being in the office is a great way to engage with fellow colleagues to make communication easier when speaking electronically

- **External**

- Always talk with a supervising attorney or partner before responding, and make sure they sign off on what is being communicated
- If a response requires research, do not be afraid to say, "I will get back to you"
 - Give a time frame that allows you gather the facts and answers that you need to be responsive to the client

Responsiveness/Timeliness

- **Respond** to all emails and phone calls **promptly**.
- Respond to every email or voice message **before the end of the day it comes in**, even if the response is simply, “We will review this and get back to you tomorrow (Wednesday).”
- If you make a commitment to a deadline, meet it.
- When you cannot meet a deadline for reasons outside of your control, provide an update as soon as possible.
- Provide updates as the deadline approaches, such as, “We are still on track to get you the markup on Friday.”
- Never let a deadline pass without communicating with the supervisor/client before the deadline.

Time Management

- Plan your day in advance and keep an updated calendar
- Communication with colleagues is key – be clear about whether you can accept work, need more time, or if you are at capacity.
 - Prioritize with the partners on time requirements
 - Timekeeping: Make sure to properly bill hours and record all time – DO NOT ESTIMATE
 - Honesty is the best policy
- Alternate between responsiveness and focused time.
- If you have a light workload, do not procrastinate or stretch projects.
- Be the squeaky wheel – remind your supervisor often that you have capacity.
- Use downtime to complete CLE and nonbillable projects; demonstrate a willingness to help and learn.

Work Allocation and Research

- **Work Allocation**

- Teamwork: Rely on each other and communicate effectively
- Accountability: You are in this position because your team relies on you as well!
- When struggling on assignments, reach out and be honest so that you do not fall behind

- **Research**

- Primary Sources: Federal Rules, State Rules, Statutes, Case Law
- Treatises
- Practical Law Institute (PLI)
- Informational Updates and Newsletters (Ex: *Wall Street Journal*)

Preparation

- **Questions to Note and Ask**

- What type of transaction?
- Who is the client?
 - Lender's side or Borrowing Side?
- Who is opposing counsel?
- Who are the creditors?
- What is the deadline?

- **When Submitting Assignments**

- Review formatting
- Review spelling
- Get a second set of eyes
- Be consistent throughout the substance
- Make sure you can provide your reasoning for answers



Effort

- Do your best to “figure it out” rather than rely on more experienced team members to think for you.
- Before you ask questions, think through the issues thoroughly and consider whether you know the answer or could appropriately figure it out on your own.
- Compile your questions in batches and be prepared before you interrupt a team member to ask questions. Write down your questions and write down the answers.
- DO ask questions and get answers from team members. Other attorneys/paralegals/case assistants can offer valuable info.
- Take ownership of each and every project, task, assignment, and responsibility that you have.
- Take a task as far as you can on your own before passing it back to a supervisor. Use your judgment for exceptions to this – if there is a threshold question that changes the entire project, stop and ask.
- Fill in blanks, attach exhibits, and draft related documents as soon as possible.

Meetings

- Prepare for calls/meetings in advance. Locate and reread the relevant documents, prior notes, and emails.
- Show up a few minutes early and bring an extra copy of materials for your supervisor. Be prepared to give your supervisor a rundown of what has transpired to date.
- Bring a pen and a notepad (or tablet) and take notes. Date your notes and file them appropriately (electronically or physically).
- If you are not the lead lawyer on the call, you are responsible for taking detailed notes about the call/meeting.
- Keep track of “to do’s” and remind your supervisor of issues or items they may have overlooked before the call/meeting ends.
- After the call or meeting concludes, ask your supervisor whether there is anything you should be doing to move the project forward.
- Virtual meetings
 - professional appearance
 - presentable background
 - when to be on camera vs. voice only



Tips and Tricks

- **Questions to Ask Senior Associates and Partners**
 - How can I help?
 - Can I listen on a call?
 - Shadowing Seniors and Partners
 - Open to constructive criticism
 - Individual learning and reading
 - Checklists
 - Meet with mentor or ask seniors for precedent
 - Develop relationships with peers on either side of the table

Questions?