

CAREER & WORKPLACE

Emerging Attorney: Jillian Ponterio



JOED VIERA

Jillian Ponterio is an attorney at Lipsitz & Ponterio LLC in Buffalo.

By [Patrick Connelly](#) Reporter , Buffalo Business First
Apr 17, 2020, 10:59am EDT

[Jillian Ponterio](#) has a busy slate with her legal career and a jewelry business she runs on the side.

“When I am not at the office, I am usually creating new designs and working on my website and products,” she said.

She founded her company, Jewels by Jill 716, in 2019 when she started to create handmade bracelets from crystal stones which some say have healing powers.

“I think it’s important as an attorney to have hobbies on the side since the legal profession is so demanding,” she said. “The jewelry is a lot of work, but I enjoy it!”

It offers a nice change of pace from her work at Lipsitz & Ponterio LLC. She primarily represents people who were catastrophically injured, as well as individuals with occupational diseases such as mesothelioma and lung cancer resulting from exposure to asbestos products.

“The clients are the best part of my practice area (and) particularly, the asbestos clients,” she said. “These amazing people have been diagnosed with terminal cancers, but nevertheless are willing to welcome me into their family homes.”

“I visit with them at their kitchen tables and learn about their families, grandchildren and hear their life stories. These men and women are inspirational.”

At the firm, she also has the unique opportunity to work alongside her mother and father: attorneys Mary Comerford and Michael Ponterio.

What do you wish you had known before you started your career? Be prepared for new challenges every day! The law is ever evolving and, therefore, so is our profession. Preparation is the key to success. Stay abreast of changes in the law, new areas of the law, and welcome new opportunities. Learning does not end after law school.

(Law) is a competitive field and it is extremely male-dominated. Clients judge you by how you treat them and the legal representation you provide, whereas you do not always receive the same respect in the legal profession. Be assertive and confident in your field.

How do you manage your time effectively? I am not sure that I do! I often run late and stay up late. After work, I frequently spend the entire night making jewelry. I am lucky to have family, friends and dogs to keep me balanced. It is as important to me to show up for them as it is for me to show up to work.

That’s the best strategy that I have for time management – show up for the things and people that matter. As long as I am there for the important moments in both my professional and personal life, then I consider my time effectively managed. A consistent work life balance is key.

What criteria was important to you in a workplace? Growing up, I saw how important my dad’s clients were to him and I admired the sense of family he brought to the workplace. My dad’s clients are not just his clients from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. – they remain his clients on the weekends when he visits their homes, checks up on them and gets to know them in his “free-time.”

I always dreamt of working with my dad. The opportunity to work with my family, and to get to know clients and their families, makes (my work feel like) home.

What keeps you motivated? My family keeps me grounded and motivated. My mom has defied typical gender roles and has dedicated different parts of her life to her family and to her career as an attorney. As for my dad, I dare you to find another attorney who outworks him. I have never met anyone who puts as much time, energy, expertise and passion into their work as he does on a daily basis. He has done this for over thirty years. Watching him do everything he does, and do it so effortlessly, is the best motivation I could have.

What do you hope to accomplish as an attorney? I hope to provide the best legal representation I can for my clients. Mesothelioma is a terminal cancer and it is a humbling honor to be a part of a victim’s life.

If I can make the legal process easier for them and secure justice for my client and their family, then I am doing my job right. My professional goal is to be the best that I can be for my clients. That is what they deserve.



Aside from her legal work, Ponterio sells handmade jewelry online.

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