

Member Spotlight

Anderson Cao

McGlinchy Stafford

What do you do?

I help people achieve their goals or resolve their obstacles, primarily in the context of these people's businesses, and primarily using my legal education. I am in the performing arts in that one of my daily challenges is to take a vision existing in my mind and replicate it in someone else's. My performance tools are the written word (like an author), the spoken word (like a poet), nonverbal body communication (like a dancer), and props (like a stage performer). As a perk, I spend most of my time acquiring knowledge and solving puzzles.

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Is a hot dog a sandwich?

Yes. There was a time when Subway used to cut into its sandwich bread from the top instead of the side, creating a v-shaped trench. Nobody had a problem with those being called sandwiches. If we, as a society, are okay with that Subway canoe being called a sandwich, then a hot dog should also be categorized as a sandwich even though the bun sides are not separate. Also, a lobster roll is considered a sandwich, so should the hot dog. Besides, a hot dog is guaranteed to split its bun as soon as it is disturbed, so it is destined to be a full-fledged sandwich anyway.

How have you been active in the ABA?

My involvement in the ABA began with an invitation to contribute to the TIPS Law Journal. After co-authoring articles for the Law Journal's Annual Survey issue for a few years, I decided to attend a meeting. So many people welcomed me at the meeting, and I heard so many great speakers, that I returned to my office recharged and with renewed enthusiasm for lawyering. Those same welcoming people encouraged me to assume additional roles over the following years. I was also lucky to be invited to the TIPS Leadership Academy. In all, I've been privileged to serve as a co-author of Business Litigation Committee's Annual Survey articles, lead author of the BLC's articles, BLC Vice Chair of Newsletters, BLC Vice Chair of Membership, Chair of the Intellectual Property Law Committee, editor of the TIPS Law Journal, author of miscellaneous newsletter articles, graduate of the Leadership Academy, CLE panelist and moderator, and BLC's Not-So-Secret-Santa Random Assignment Generator. I look forward to serving as BLC's chair in 2018–2019.

Is there anything about the future that makes you concerned?

Self-driving cars. I love cars and driving, but that's not why I fear self-driving cars.

I really fear spiders. But presently, I know I can always drive away from a spider. With self-driving cars, a spider does not even need to reach the pedals to continue harassing me. It can just climb into a self-driving car and the chase is on. I bet a spider doesn't even need to wear a seat belt because of its exoskeleton. At least ride-sharing services require a credit card, which most spiders don't carry yet.

How has ABA membership been valuable to you?

There are obvious and tangible ABA membership benefits such as periodicals and CLEs. But, the ABA's greatest benefits are intangible. Being a national organization encompassing all practice areas, the ABA reminds me that the practice of law is more than just what is happening at my desk, in my firm, in my local jurisdiction, or in my practice area. That reminder is refreshing.

The ABA has allowed me to assume several leadership roles. I have applied this experience to positions inside my law firm and board positions in the community.

ABA membership has also introduced me to new friends hailing from all over North America. Again, it is refreshing to interact with peers from different jurisdictions with different career paths because they bring different wisdom. And while my relationships from the ABA can and have led to referrals, it is also nice to simply share a toast and a laugh with friends.

If you could travel back in time, who would you meet?

A bookie. I don't enjoy or condone gambling, so this would be perfect because gambling only occurs if I don't know the outcome. Biff Tannen had the right idea.

What is a tip that you have found useful?

The legal profession overuses the term "persuasion." Instead of trying to persuade your audience to adopt a view or take an action, inspire them. Consider the connotations and mental images associated with "persuade" versus "inspire." Salespeople *persuade* buyers to follow them. Pastors *inspire* congregants to find their own way to live better. Whenever you encounter the word "persuade," substitute "inspire" and adjust your approach accordingly.

What is something you cannot abide?

Oatmeal raisin cookies. How dare anyone defile dessert with tasteless fiber, and then compound that with a fruit way past its prime? It is so uninspiring that marketing savants could not even come up with a catchy name like snickerdoodle or Oreo, instead adjourning the meeting after reciting two ingredients which aren't even the best ones. Worst of all is that an oatmeal raisin cookie can easily be mistaken for a chocolate chip cookie at a glance. Because we're lawyers, we can indulge in the



totally fictional hypothetical of an ABA member making his way toward the end of the cafeteria line, grabbing a chocolate chip cookie in a hurry because the person behind him keeps bumping his tray, only to discover that he actually grabbed an oatmeal raisin death disc. He might as well have chosen the Jello with fruit suspended in it. It's nearly as vile but doesn't masquerade as a more delicious dessert. We need a hashtag for this.

Get on your soapbox.

Everything that happens to you in this career occurs because someone advocated for you when you were not in the room. From the time you apply to law school, your personal recommendations come from those who vouch for you. In the hiring process, insiders will be making the case for your selection to their peers. When it comes time to decide who is invited to the firm partnership, existing partners will be lending you their credibility as they advocate for you before the decision makers. In trial, you hope that jurors become your surrogates in the jury room during deliberation. It is no small favor for someone to stake their credibility and reputation—both hard-earned and finite assets—on someone else. Cultivate your advocates because they are your door openers.

What appeals to you about the law?

There are few careers with direct head-to-head competition built into the system. Sports, military, politics, and law come to mind. A surgeon tries to help the body heal itself but there is not an opposing surgeon on the other side of the operating table trying to kill the patient. Surgery seems hard enough already. If competition is appealing, then practicing law can scratch that itch.

Describe the worst day of your career.

In this career, I go from one climate controlled bubble to another, never risking life or limb. Business leaders look to me for advice and answers, and they actually pay for me to learn new things. Every day is different and my brain is constantly tickled by peeking into clients' industries. My peers are smart, interesting, and engaging people who challenge me. I'm not rich, but there's no restaurant where I cannot eat.

My parents did not dare to dream of having careers, they settled for the best jobs for which they could qualify. By comparison, no matter what adverse rulings, disagreements, errors, or inconveniences happen to me in this career, there are no bad days. Except when my boxed lunch comes with an oatmeal raisin cookie.