



Rachel R. Keyo: Paralegal at Greenberg Traurig, LLP, Boston, MA

[By Judith Earley]

Rachel R. Keyo describes her mother as a truly strong and amazing woman who instilled in her the truth that there is nothing she cannot accomplish.

And it is with that conviction that Keyo excels as a paralegal working within the corporate and securities group of the Boston office of Greenberg Traurig, LLP, an international law firm with more than 1,500 attorneys and professionals working in 29 locations across the United States, Europe, and Asia.

Keyo assists attorneys and shareholders and has a wide variety of U.S. and international clients.

Her assignments involve day-to-day operations, general corporate maintenance, acquisitions, divestitures, structuring, and the financing of various business transactions.

"I am also responsible for managing the formation of entities, preparing initial corporate documents, closing certificates, managing due diligence requests, and executing closing sets, in addition to preparing Blue Sky securities filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission and various state securities divisions," said Keyo.

The law has always interested Keyo, but she was not certain she wanted to become a lawyer.

"While attending Northeastern University and participating in their co-op program, I was hired to work in a small law firm as an entry-level paralegal. I truly enjoyed the assignments and my responsibilities. That position confirmed my interest in the paralegal profession," she said.

She found her current job through legal-recruiting and placement firm Beacon Hill Staffing, which forwarded her resume to Leanne Plant in the Boston office of Greenberg Traurig, LLP.

Keyo said that she truly loves her work as a paralegal. Although she enjoys all of the corporate assignments she is given, she most enjoys private equity/private placement work and Blue Sky assignments. On the flip side, one of her most difficult challenges is dealing with attorneys who do not know how to properly utilize paralegals within their firms.

"Many times, attorneys will handle assignments that a paralegal can do. This to me is an inefficient use of time and money that we bill to our clients," said Keyo.

Keyo's compassion and dedication are not limited to her work at the office. Shelter Legal Services Foundation, Inc., is an organization that provides legal services to homeless and low-income individuals. Keyo volunteers at the organization's legal clinics, which are conducted at shelters in Boston and Cambridge.

"While working on client cases, I met some truly amazing people who often at times knew more about the law process than myself and the supervising attorneys," said Keyo. "These people were filled with gratitude for all the work we did for them."

Clients express their thanks in many ways. For example, Keyo handled an immigration case for a woman seeking to obtain her residency card so that she could become a citizen.

"Following many years of preparation and process, she was granted citizenship and invited me to the ceremony where she would be sworn in as a United States citizen. I sat

in the seats next to her entire family. I felt so honored to be there. I found myself crying at the end of the ceremony," said Keyo.

Another skill set that Keyo brings to the table is her fluency in French and Haitian Kreyol. Her language skills have allowed her to serve as a translator when meeting with clients and at administrative hearings while working in a small law firm.

Keyo said that she considers her membership in the Massachusetts Paralegal Association quite valuable. It keeps her current with changes in many areas of the law, provides her with a networking forum of colleagues, and allows her to support and promote her profession. Her advice for students who are preparing to become paralegals is to gain experience by volunteering with pro bono organizations and joining paralegal associations in their states.

"Working on pro bono matters and volunteering to assist attorneys in providing legal services played a major role. These experiences taught me to interact with clients, pay attention to detail, manage my time, and become very organized," said Keyo.

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