



David Dormon – Walking in My Purpose

What did you do at Vedder?

I lateraled over as a new mid-level and was focused on private equity, particularly middle market private equity, and everything that goes into deals from an M&A perspective. This includes representing private equity funds, or even sometimes strategic buyers, in their acquisition or disposition of companies and assets.

At my previous firm I had a lot of deal experience. Vedder Price gave me an education on the details of transitions and deals. This happened via strong mentorship by [Shelby Parnes](#) and [David Swendsen](#) (current Vedder Shareholders), who really helped me refine the way I approach drafting, legal analysis and review and, of course, [Michael Nemeroff](#), with whom I worked closely while I was at the firm. Their mentorship was instrumental to my growth.

Also the internal trainings that Vedder hosted increased my understanding of deals. I was able to learn the really basic aspects of being a mid-level Associate and rising to those senior ranks. It was a very important educational experience for me, my time at Vedder.

What are you doing now?

At Vedder, I had an inkling of determining exactly what it is I wanted to do. I loved the technical aspects of M&A and private equity, but I knew that I wanted to link it with my passion, music.

I was hired by Downtown Music Holdings for M&A work. One part of the role was acquiring music catalogs – essentially the owned copyrights of songwriters – meaning acquiring the rights from either mid-tier writers or really famous writers. And also M&A from a company perspective. We were quickly expanding as a company. My role was to help execute our mergers and acquisition strategy for the inorganic part of our growth.

I worked in the M&A role for a few years, and I had a mentor, Peter Rosenthal, who was the general counsel at the time, and he really helped me further develop my skills from a corporate perspective. He had some corporate experience and, from the music perspective, he helped me in understanding the industry.

I left Downtown for another music opportunity and then I got word that my mentor was moving on from Downtown. I've been the General Counsel of Downtown Music Holdings for a few months now and it's really been an incredible ride.

The unique part of this job is it's a large company but it still has a somewhat small company feel in the sense that I really have to have hands on every single thing that we do. There are so many different aspects that go into our business and it's just been illuminating to be able to be involved and contribute in all of those facets. And I think a lot of the tools that I gained at Vedder – the attention to detail that I learned – has really paid off for me in the long run.

Outside Counsel and In-House Counsel Relationship

I think it's a relationship of trust. My view of it has absolutely shifted as I've grown through the law, but I think it's super important to understand that when a client is dealing with outside counsel, they're not looking for a professor, they're not looking for an intellectual exposé on a particular legal issue. They are looking for solutions much like they would look to a consultant or another service provider to help solve a problem. When you're talking to outside counsel, you really want direct advice. Most importantly, you want that advice through the lens of your business. You want somebody that's like: "You know what, I understand what your business does and I understand the position of your business in the market and through that lens; here is my advice as it relates to this particular issue that you're dealing with."

Preparation Steps to Meet with a General Counsel

I'd say I'd want outside counsel to make sure they have a real intimate knowledge of my industry. Make sure they have some understanding of key terms and then the language that we speak when it comes to the industry. Also, they should have an appreciation of what some of my key concerns are likely to be. If this is a general introduction, you don't need to know everything.

If you're there to answer a specific legal question or help with a transaction or litigation, having an idea on what concerns they may have so that you can be prepared to provide some guidance there or prepared to at least talk about those capabilities within the right context is so incredibly important.

Proud Achievement

From a professional perspective, my elevation to General Counsel is my proudest achievement. I think there were a lot of moments in my career where I thought, "What is it that I really want to do?" And now I know I am **walking in my purpose**.

For a long time I felt I was walking toward it but how do I calibrate in order to point myself in the correct direction, because in law in particular, it can be really difficult to point yourself in the right direction because so much of what you do depends on the work that comes in the door.

And I'm eager to continue to grow. I absolutely know that I'm still growing and I still need to continue to grow and need to approach my work and my position with a learner's mindset. I try to lead from that perspective. There is so much more to learn and expand on.

It's not easy being in our profession in big law and dealing with the kinds of demands that clients have. Clients can be really difficult. When somebody's going through a large transaction or a big litigation matter, no one's really thinking, well, how do my lawyers feel? – It's just about getting through it.

So just being able to go through all those experiences and being able to see so many deals and being able to be in really tight spots, high stress and highwire situations allows me to now approach things in my career with poise. There is not much that you can show me these days that causes me to panic, and I really do credit that to my experience in the law firm world.

Firm News

Pro Bono News

2021 Awards

- Office Award – Los Angeles
- Pro Bono Spirit Award – Ryan Helgeson

Overall

- Shareholder – Amy Bess, 215.8 hours
- Associate – Sudip Mitra, 295 hours
- Paralegal – Napoleon Zapata, 275.8 hours

Office – Shareholder/Associate

- Chicago – Brett Heinrich, 105.4/Kathryn Rosenbaum 216.8
- DC – Anand Ramana, 94.9/Tamara Droubi, 148.2
- London – None/Henrietta Worthington 204.5
- Los Angeles – Anthony Pacheco, 96.4/Deborah Hedley, 79.9
- New York – Joshua Dunn, 98.2/Francisca Wolfenson, 195.2
- SF – None/Peter Walrod, 68.6

Associate Ryan Burandt helped a family receive asylum, and the government waived appeal. The family is from the southern part of Nigeria where FGM is most prevalent. Relocation was not a possibility because the clan threatening them has a reach that spans across that region, and Boko Haram and ISIS have inflicted religious violence throughout the central and northern regions. Ryan did the opening statement and direct examination of the mother, who was a victim of FGM and the primary asylum applicant. For his great work, he was named the National Immigrant Justice Center Rookie of the Year.



VedderCares

- To honor the veterans at the firm on Veterans Day, a donation was made to the Gary Sinise Foundation on their behalf. We thank these individuals for their service to the country ([Daniel Green](#), Alan Haley, [David Hernandez](#), Ron Hite, [Michael Mulcahy](#), Gregory Scollan, [Daniel Sherlock](#) and [Jeremiah Vandermark](#)).
- Holiday Gift Drive – In each office, a gift drive was hosted benefitting children in need. The organizations supported include Direct Effect Charities & Misericordia in Chicago, Toys for Tots in Washington, DC, and Brown Bag Lady in California. Additionally, the firm made donations to Rise Against Hunger, FareShare and Arc Children's Centre.
- Chicago Ping Pong for a Purpose – Our annual ping pong tournament was won by Information Security Analyst Brad Tuszynski after a hard fought game against Shareholder [Tony Ashley](#). The firm made a donation to PAWS Chicago on Brad's behalf.

Office News

• Merisa Lima was hired as Vedder Price's first Director of Diversity & Inclusion.



In December 2021, Merisa S. Lima joined the firm as the Director of Diversity & Inclusion. Ms. Lima previously held diversity-focused positions with Mayer Brown LLP and, more recently, Sidley Austin LLP. In those roles she was responsible for implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of Diversity and Inclusion initiatives and programs.

Based in Chicago, Ms. Lima is responsible for the further development and implementation of programs, policies, and initiatives that support Vedder's strategic diversity and inclusion goals. In this role she oversees department's operations, protocol and budget. Additionally, works to strengthen relationships between diversity-related organizations and the firm.

• Our Washington, DC and San Francisco offices have moved to accommodate our growing teams!

The new offices can be found at the following addresses

1 Post Street
Suite 2400
San Francisco, CA 94104

1401 New York Avenue NW
Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005

• The Dallas office celebrated its one-year anniversary with a cocktail reception at Fearing's Restaurant at The Ritz Carlton.



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Want to be featured in a spotlight or class note?

E-mail alumni@vedderprice.com

What is the portal?

The [Alumni Portal](#) is exclusive to current and former Vedder Price attorneys and includes resources for connecting with former colleagues, finding new career opportunities and sourcing talent for your open positions from the alumni community. Additionally, the portal is your one-stop shop for firm updates, alumni events and spotlights on former Vedder Price attorneys.

How do I use the portal?

Within the portal, you can search through the Directory to see where your former colleagues are now, search for new opportunities on the Job Board or send us your open positions to find talent in the Vedder network. Additionally, you can download the quarterly newsletter to learn more about the network.