



Volunteer Attorney: Gary Ballesteros

What is your current position?

I am the Vice President of Law and Ombudsman at Rockwell Automation. The two positions are pretty distinct, with the former being my role as a leader of a global team of Rockwell lawyers, and the latter being my role as an ethics officer and point person for whistleblower complaints.

What do you love about being “in house”?

I love that my position allows me to see and improve my expertise in a wide variety of legal issues on a daily basis. By trade, general counsels are “generalists,” so each day is largely different from the day before it and I liked the change of pace.

Where did you go to undergrad? What did you study?

I studied Business at the University of Illinois.

Where did you go to law school?

I went to University of Michigan Law School.

What activities were you involved in in law school?

The best experience I had in law school was during my third year. I was given the opportunity to be a Legal Writing and Research instructor for first-year students. From this experience, I discovered my passion for teaching and have since gone on to teach at Marquette University Law School as an adjunct professor.

What was your favorite class in law school? Which class did you learn the most in?

Along this theme, my favorite class in law school was Legal Writing and Research. Despite this, I do not believe that there is one particular class that I learned the most in or use frequently within my practice. Ultimately, the focus of law school is to teach you the fundamentals and how to think about the law, not necessarily learning everything there is to know about a particular field of law within six academic semesters. It is a valuable and important educational experience.

This concept is shown in my pro bono work. I do not practice in many of the areas addressed at the Marquette Volunteer Legal Clinic, yet my basic lawyering skills allow me to use professional judgment and advise a client well.

How did you start volunteering at MVLC?

Years ago, Rockwell Automation championed a program to get their legal department to do pro bono legal work and give back to the community using their legal skill set. I have always felt it is important to volunteer your time and skills to make the community a better place, so participation in the program

and volunteering with the MVLC was a natural continuation of this value. Those who know me well often joke that I have a “medical problem,” in that my right arm goes up into the air whenever someone asks for a volunteer.

Do you have any advice for students volunteering at MVLC?

Simply keep doing what you are doing. I am incredibly impressed, time after time, with the Marquette Law students. They provide valuable assistance with each client, whether it is quick research, concise notetaking or something else. You all do great work.

What advice would you give current law students?

I would recommend sitting down with as many attorneys as you can and learn what they do day-to-day as well as long-term. It can be enlightening to hear them talk about their career, especially if you are still searching for the area of law you would like to practice. I wish I would have done this more when I was a law student.

What do you do like to do in your spare time?

I love to be outdoors as much as I can because my job keeps me indoors most days. In particular, I own a 15-acre hobby farm, which is one place you can often find me on the weekends.