





# The Littlest Lawyer

By Tracey E. Diamond

**W**e argued over her clothes. “You’re visiting my office – you need to look professional,” I reasoned. “What does ‘professional’ mean?” she demanded. “It means you can’t wear the shorts with the word ‘dance’ on your butt.” After several minutes of intense negotiation, we settled on a flowered shirt, capris and a big pink ribbon for her hair.

She chatted happily through the traffic on the Ben Franklin Bridge. All of the daily trials and tribulations of a nine-year-old: Who is friends with whom, what’s for dinner, will we be back in time for jazz class, etc. I half-listened, my mind already on the nuances of my day – an upcoming deposition, a handbook to review, a brief that needed to be written.

She noted that the bridge looked different from my office window, then promptly turned away and demanded hot chocolate from the coffee machine. I obliged, she spilled and then it was off to the conference room for her mock jury trial in the “Case of the Purloined Slipper.” (Spoiler alert – the prince was found guilty.) She looked shy and unsure, so small at that too big conference table.

Two billable hours later, it was time to gather her for lunch. We slipped into the cafeteria to share French fries and idle chit-chat, enjoying the view of the Art Museum by the Schuylkill River. Then to my office so I could take a few phone calls and she could learn how to use the copy machine, make “stapler art” for my neighbors and generally charm the 31st floor.

By the end of the day, her ponytail was undone, her shirt showed evidence of a hot fudge sundae and she told anyone who would listen that she planned to come to work with me every day. Apparently, there are fewer opportunities to “decide things” (and eat ice cream) in third grade.

We popped into the Comcast building before heading home to marvel at the screen in the lobby, passing several other weary-looking parents in business suits with kids

in tow. We both stared wide-eyed into the rafters. (“How did they get those statues up there?” she wondered.) We rode the escalator up and down a few times, just for fun.

She snored peacefully during the car ride home, coming down from her sugar high, dreaming of judges and juries, princesses and missing slippers. Energized from her catnap, she jumped out of her “work clothes” and into the shorts with the word “dance” across the butt, sashaying her way into jazz class. I slumped down into the molded plastic seat in the lobby, completely exhausted by the collision of my two worlds, my iPhone buzzing with unanswered emails.

It is too soon to tell whether my daughter will “lean in” or lean out. Whether she will be able to figure out what “all” means for her so that she can truly “have it all.” The bottom line is that it is not easy juggling work and home. But I love my work and I love my family. So we figure it out. I hope that giving Chloe a glimpse into my “other world” opened her eyes to the layers of possibilities that lie waiting for her so that she too can some day “figure it out.” Isn’t that what “take your child to work day” is all about?

Whether or not my daughter joins me on the trip across the bridge every day someday, I do know one thing for certain: My office is a brighter place because of a small square of “stapler art” hanging on my bulletin board. ■

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