

## Strohbehn embraces her argumentative nature

By: Mary Beth Matzek August 1, 2014 12:45 pm



Erin Strohbehn (Staff photo by Kevin Harnack)

Erin Strohbehn doesn't shy away from a good argument.

"I have a strong personality and will argue every point," said Strohbehn, a litigator with Gimbel Reilly Guerin & Brown LLP, Milwaukee. "I honestly didn't think about law school until a journalism advisor mentioned it to me and I thought, 'That's a good fit. I love to write and argue.'"

Strohbehn handles a variety of cases, including personal injury and business and probate litigation. She said she thrives on the diversity.

"Every day is a learning experience, and the days go by quickly," she said. "The variety, however, does prevent me from becoming an expert in anything, except for arguing, of course. I'm great at that."

That passion shows at home, too, she said, where she and her husband, Chris Strohbehn, a partner at the firm, love to debate.

"He has a more moderate personality," she said, "I'm fierier. It will be interesting to see how our daughter turns out."

While some of her law school colleagues waited years to get in court, Strohbehn said, she landed her first court appearance the day after she was sworn in.

"I am in court a lot," she said. "A lot of it is motions hearings, but I really consider myself lucky to get that time in court."

But Strohbehn said some of her most rewarding work takes place away from the courtroom, when a phone call or letter can help settle a dispute.

"It's so nice to be able to fix a minor problem for someone that can really make a big difference in his or her world," she said. "I'm not changing the world on a grand scale. But on a smaller scale, I'm making someone's life better."

**Wisconsin Law Journal:** What was your least-favorite class in law school?

**Erin Strohbehn:** Interestingly, one of my favorite law school professors, Dan Blinka, taught my least favorite law school class: criminal law. For whatever reason, while I enjoy the interesting stories underlying certain cases, I have

never had any desire to practice criminal law. As a result, I am one of the only attorneys at our firm that does not have a criminal defense practice.

**WLJ:** What do you think is the biggest misconception people have about attorneys?

**Strohbehn:** I think that the public's biggest misconception is that we are all well-off. These days, many law students come out of school with hundreds of thousands of dollars in student loan debt incurred during undergrad and law school. As a result, if an attorney is lucky enough to secure a job practicing law, a huge chunk of his or her

paycheck is devoted to student loan payments. My husband and I joke about the beautiful mythical house we pay for each month. Sadly, we'll never visit it. In addition, I think that many young lawyers are holding off on starting families because they are weighed down by the debt. Unlike banks, they can't get a bailout.

**WLJ:** If you could have any superpower, what would it be?

**Strohbehn:** According to my colleagues, I already have a superpower: procurement. I'm the go-to person for anything we need at the office: furniture, kitchenware, law clerks, baked goods, artwork, interns, holiday cards, etc. If GRGB needs it, Erin Strohbehn procures it.

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