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# Boston Business Journal

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## Legal interest: From maritime to museums, area lawyers carve unique niches for themselves

Boston Business Journal - by [Mary K. Pratt](#) Special to the Journal

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One has an enduring love of the ocean. Another grew up in a house where art was literally married to law. And another had an early (and strong) fascination with new technologies.

Many lawyers will talk about their passion for the law, but a few can also parlay their passions and personal interests into legal careers with unique subpractices.

We talked to three lawyers who have found success by following their own interests.

### His legal practice is a work of art

There's no question that the career path of Peter J. Caruso II was influenced by his parents.

His father is a lawyer, his mother is an artist. Caruso, a partner at **Prince Lobel Glovsky & Tye LLP**, specializes in the representation of artists, art organizations, museums and galleries.

"It's sort of this collision of two worlds that I really found fascinating," he said.

Despite the differences in the legal profession and the art world, Caruso said artists have plenty of need for legal advice. Similarly, there's plenty of legal work in the art world.

Caruso said he had wanted to focus in this area since he was a law student at **Suffolk University**. Following his graduation in 1996, he went to work with his father at his Andover-based firm, **Caruso & Caruso LLP**. His father worked with media outlets, which often had legal questions around the art that they'd use in their work. Caruso said this experience gave him an entry into his current work in the art world.

Caruso built his career from there, taking continuing education courses on art law and building a client base. He also started to work with the Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts of Massachusetts, published articles on art law and lectured on the topic.

He continued along this path when in June 2008 he joined Prince Lobel. Caruso, a partner at the Boston firm, also works on trademark, copyright and intellectual property rights, First Amendment issues, accession, deaccession, stolen art, privacy issues, art import and export, provenance, privacy, and business and corporate matters.

He is one of the drafters of the **Massachusetts Art Consignment Statute**, enacted to afford additional protection to consignors of fine art.

Caruso said the field of art law, while long complex, is expanding as electronic media, digital creations and virtual worlds raise new legal issues for artists.

"It's never a dull day in art law," he said.

### Secure in her niche

The start of Julie A. Frohlich's legal specialty happened while she was a first-year student at **Boston University School of Law** in 1986, but it wasn't any particular class or professor that set her on that path. It was her first computer.

Even though it can't compare to the powerful PCs of today, Frohlich said she was amazed at what the computer could do. And when she bought her second one, she promptly tore apart her first to see how everything worked.

Comfortable with technology, Frohlich later became an early adopter of the Internet, signing up for America Online the second week it was available. She was soon buying products online, even though others thought she was being risky.

Prompted by those skeptics and anxious to produce arguments to counter their assertions — she is, of course, a lawyer — she started to research computer-related privacy and security issues.

Today more than 50 percent of her practice involves personal information and data security, most of which involves technology in some



way. Frohlich, a director at **Goulston & Storrs PC** in Boston, also focuses on civil litigation with a particular emphasis on complex business and commercial disputes.

Frohlich's work has made her a capable technologist as well as a lawyer. She gained much of her technical aptitude through her own tinkering with technology — a classic techie trait — as well as through past clients who tutored her on various IT systems.

She said such knowledge is critical for her to do her job. She often works directly with corporate IT officials to ensure they're preventing security breaches and adhering to various regulations, including Massachusetts' soon-to-be implemented data security statute, the toughest in the country, or working with them to deal with the aftermath of a breach.

"What I love about this area of practice is that you never know what you're going to be doing a year or two from now," she said.

#### Gaining his sea legs

Dartmouth native Seth M. Bonneau grew up on Buzzards Bay and has long had a love of sailing.

So it's not too surprising he is building a specialty in maritime law, even if he himself didn't expect to.

"Getting into the maritime industry was a product of where my firm was located," explained Bonneau, who is a recent arrival at **Ruberto, Israel & Weiner PC** in Boston.

Bonneau, who graduated from Suffolk University Law School in 2004, joined **Halloran, Lukoff & Smith PC** in New Bedford after working for a year at a downtown law firm. He said he took the New Bedford job in part for the opportunity to work more closely with clients.

He said working in that city opened up his path within the legal profession.

During his four years in New Bedford — the country's largest grossing port in dollar value thanks to the local scallop harvest — Bonneau represented sellers, buyers and lenders in transactions involving the sale of fishing vessels and commercial fishing permits.

Such deals, he explained, involved some impressive figures; consider, for example that a scalloping permit from the **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration** goes for \$3 million to \$4 million.

Bonneau, whose overall practice focuses on banking, finance and lending as well as commercial real estate, said his work in maritime law crosses those disciplines, adding extra layers of complexity that require added due diligence.

For example, he says, banks that finance maritime vessels longer than 100 feet in length must register with the **U.S. Department of Transportation**. And because most commercial fishing vessels are owned by corporations and not individuals (because of liability), researching titles are often more complex than title searches on other types of assets.

Handling bad loans required a trip to federal court in Boston, because maritime issues are federally regulated.

Bonneau, who joined Ruberto, Israel & Weiner about three months ago, said he'd like to build up a maritime law practice with his new firm. It's an area that already has some established local firms, including **Latti & Anderson LLP** and **Regan & Kiely LLP**.

Bonneau also hopes to buy a new sailboat, upgrading to a 35-foot one, to replace the 27-foot Catalina he sold earlier this year.

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