



Up & Coming Lawyers

ALANA VAN DER MUDE RUSIN

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Since she began practicing law eight years ago, Alana Van Der Mude Rusin has built a reputation as a powerhouse litigator, a fierce advocate for domestic violence victims, and a champion of Boston's arts community. In her real estate practice, Rusin is on the front lines when issues involving complex zoning, permitting, leasing and contract disputes end up in court.

Q. What do you consider your biggest achievement as a lawyer to date?

A. Co-chairing a bench trial last year in Franklin Superior Court. We successfully defended the grant of a special permit against an appeal by abutters who opposed our client's plans to redevelop an underutilized old mining site into a large store. It was exciting, scary, hard work, and I learned a lot about myself as a litigator.

Q. What's the most satisfying case or matter you've worked on so far?

A. Through my pro bono work with the Women's Bar Foundation, I represented a woman who had managed to break free of a very abusive relationship. My client obtained a restraining order against her former partner, whose behavior was very unpredictable because he was in and out of homelessness and relapsing from drug addiction. For over three years, I represented my client at hearings to extend the order. At the last hearing we were able to obtain a permanent restraining order to get her lasting protection from abuse. We both cried, and it was one of the proudest moments of my life, both personally and professionally.

Q. What advice would you offer new law school graduates?

A. Be generous. When you first start out, sometimes it feels like you have to be tough to be taken seriously. However, it is almost always a good idea to grant an extension, provide copies of an uncontested exhibit to opposing counsel, etc. You get what you give in life, and you will likely need a favor at some point in the future. Additionally you are building your professional reputation (and referral network) one step at a time, so the more people who see you as both a good lawyer and good person, the better for you.

Q. What's one thing about you that might surprise people?

A. I live in a former boiler room of a factory that moonlights as an art gallery and event space.

Q. If you weren't a lawyer, what job would you have?

A. I would probably own a boutique fitness studio. I am a life-long athlete who loves taking fitness classes. **MLW**

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Volunteer, Women's Bar Foundation Family Law Project for Domestic Abuse Survivors; board member, On the Rise, Cambridge-based women's shelter