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Q: When did you first take an interest in alternative dispute resolution and what prompted such interest?

A: My earliest memories include finding ways to resolve disputes without the aid of the governing authorities. Growing up in a rural community in the Deep South, access to the courts was non-existent. Local people had to develop a way to resolve daily conflicts in a way that strengthened relationships rather than weakened them. My interest in alternative dispute resolution grew from watching the elders in my community apply principles of fairness, justice, and equity.

While at Cornell Law School, I had the opportunity to take an intensive writing course with Professor Michael Gold of the ILR School. The assignment for that class exposed me to topics in alternative dispute resolution. My first job after graduating was with a firm representing public sector labor unions. As an attorney dealing with contract grievances, negotiating collective bargaining agreements, and representing clients in arbitration proceedings as well as civil litigation, I grew to appreciate the efficiency and fairness of ADR.

Q: What past professional and/or personal experiences have you had that have contributed to your growth as an arbitrator?

A: After 25 years of litigating cases in various forums, the one thing that I remember most is that for the client this may be the only case that they have or will ever have. Because of this, they deserve the very best representation and experience possible. While the outcome matters, the process sometimes matters more. If I focus on each step of the process and diligently prepare and present the case, the end result is usually just and fair. In arbitration, I have found that paying attention to the details of the process, from listening to opening statements to careful review of the evidence, and thoughtfully writing the decision, results in an equally just and fair result.

Q: Did you participate in a mentoring program and, if so, what benefits did you derive from being mentored?

A: As an American Arbitration Association® Higginbotham Fellow, I had support from Jeff Zaino and Sasha Carbone. From years practicing in front of top tier arbitrators, I developed relationships that I could draw upon. Jay Siegel has been a great mentor taking me to hearings, giving me career advice, reviewing my writing, and providing encouragement. John Trela has provided me with opportunities to mediate and to participate in impasse bargaining. I have also had opportunities to work with Kevin Flanigan, Director of PERB's Office of



Conciliation. Working with mentors is an invaluable way to learn the craft and meet advocates. I am in the process of working more closely with John Sand and Richard Adelman through the *NYSBA Labor and Employment Law* section's mentor-mentee program.

Q: How do you manage an arbitration case?

A: Since every arbitration has its own procedure, the parties are responsible for highlighting the contractual provisions. In addition to the contractual provisions, it is my practice to give the representatives of the parties an opportunity to meet and discuss possible settlement. If settlement is unlikely, barring any outstanding discovery issues, the parties are responsible for presenting their case in the manner they choose, consistent with due process, as long as they are efficient and above all civil.

Q: What advice would you give new arbitrators starting off and breaking into the profession?

A: Reread "*How Arbitration Works*." Be patient, write out a business plan, and have a daily to-do list related to that business plan. Make sure your plan includes all aspects of ADR, and share your plan with your mentors. I would also recommend joining and participating in your local and state bar associations.

Q: What do you foresee for the future of ADR—say, in the next 10 years?

A: ADR will continue to grow over the next 10 years. Administrative agencies, in their regulatory and adjudicatory functions, will use alternative dispute resolution processes to provide due process to the public. Federal, state, and local courts will expand the use of ADR as a way to better manage their crowded dockets and provide greater access to the legal system in matters involving civil litigation. State and local governments, particularly in resolving disputes related to budgets, will continue to use it to strengthen management-union relationships. The accessibility of qualified arbitrators and mediators will help litigants in all areas save money and shorten the litigation process. Since ninety percent of civil cases settle, ADR will continue to play an important role in fostering a culture where the parties truly are heard prior to the settlement of their case. As long as ADR continues to give the parties a fair and impartial alternative without the expense and time of traditional litigation, it will continue to be the preferred method of resolving disputes.