

***An Introduction to Appellate Law:
A Conversation with Troy Shelton****

Interview Conducted and Transcribed by Maclain Conlin (All errors are my own).¹

(All views expressed in this interview are those of the guest and do not necessarily represent the position of the Clemson Law Review or its leadership.)

Maclain Conlin: Welcome to the Clemson Law Review's interview series. I am here with a very special guest, Mr. Troy Shelton. Mr. Shelton is a partner at the Dowling Firm and a graduate of Duke University and the UNC School of Law, where he served in the North Carolina Law Review and graduated as part of the Order of the Coif. Prior to joining the Dowling Firm, he served as a partner at one of the nation's 100 largest law firms and clerked for a federal district judge. Today, he is widely recognized as one of North Carolina's top appellate attorneys and frequently represents clients in high profile cases. He also participates in a wide variety of pro bono activities and serves as president of the Triangle chapter of the Federalist Society in Raleigh, North Carolina. Today, he joins us to discuss his career in appellate law and to offer advice to students interested in pursuing a similar path. Mr. Shelton, thank you for joining us.

Troy Shelton: Thank you for having me.

MC: Some of the students who might read the *Clemson Law Review* are undergraduate pre-law students who aren't yet sure what legal career they might want to pursue, and they might not be fully clear on what an appellate career looks like. What does your day job look like as an appellate lawyer? What matters do you typically handle?

TS: Sure. So, there are a few different types of appellate lawyers. I think the most common type is an appellate lawyer that does everything. We're really generalists. We are specific when it comes to the courts that we practice in. We just normally practice in appellate courts. But within the appellate courts, most of us handle a bit of everything. You might say there are some things that we don't handle. I don't normally handle criminal work, though I have and can. There are some appellate attorneys that only specialize in a certain field within appeals. So there are several attorneys in the state that do just family law appeals, which is a very niche subject matter. There are other kinds of subspecialties within appellate law, but for the most part, people either dabble in appeals or they do appeals in general.

From day to day, appellate work involves not being in the courtroom a lot. There are not tons of hearings. There are not tons of oral arguments, necessarily, though there are plenty of those, enough, at least. If you like being in the courtroom all the time, you probably won't like an appeal.

I have a very full plate of appeals. I do sometimes show up in trial court and help,

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not as a lead trial counsel, but I help trial attorneys get their cases set up so that either there won't need to be an appeal or if we do lose and there is an appeal, it's in the best shape possible. So, for example, earlier this year, I sat in on a two-week jury trial here in Raleigh.

I do sort of behind the scenes work sometimes in trials, especially with juries. The jury will usually never hear my voice. I don't examine the witnesses or anything like that. But I'll argue legal motions outside the presence of the jury. Sometimes we have to write and prepare briefs on the fly during the trial, so those are things I'll be worried about during the trial in the evenings between trial days, while also preparing the jury instructions. Anything that's sort of law intensive instead of fact intensive are things that I help with at trial.

MC: Interesting. So, just out of curiosity, you mentioned that there aren't many oral arguments in an appellate lawyer's career. How many oral arguments do you think you do per year or per month?

TS: Per year, it really does vary. I mean, it can be as few as one or two. This year, I have a lot coming up. I have three coming up at the North Carolina Supreme Court in the next two months. I would have had four, but one of my partners in a case that we're working on together is doing that one, which I was thankful for. Two of them had gotten set for the same day. They were fifteen minutes apart from each other, but thankfully, the Court was kind enough to reschedule them, so they are now about twenty hours apart.

But, if you were doing four or five oral arguments per year, that's a lot for an appellate lawyer, though that can vary by state. In some states, everything is set for oral argument at their appellate courts. In North Carolina, we have two appellate courts, the Court of Appeals, which is the lower appellate court, and then we have the Supreme Court, which sits above that. So most appeals die at the Court of Appeals. That's the end of their journey. The Court of Appeals currently sets only about five percent of cases for oral argument. Historically, it was more like ten or fifteen percent. I like to think that I make the cases I handle interesting enough such that we have a better than five percent shot, but even then, I have plenty of cases that don't get oral argument at the Court of Appeals.

This is in contrast to the Supreme Court, where every case is set for oral argument. So depending on which court you're in, you know that you will definitely get oral argument, or you probably won't.

MC: Moving from the argument side to the brief writing side a little bit, I've read a number of your briefs and some of your articles over the past two years, and I always found your writings to be very clear, very concise, and very enjoyable. When did you start to develop those writing skills, and do you have any advice for students who want to hone their own writing skills?

TS: That's a great question. It's not something that happens overnight. I think it's something that happens over the course of years. So when I think of my writing style, I think of it as having different phases.

First, there is before you go to law school. I was a history major and did lots of writing in college. For your audience, I always recommend any kind of major that involves a lot of writing. If you know you want to go to law school, it's great preparation. Doing lots of reading, lots of writing, that's what I do everyday. That's history as much as anything else. So I felt like I had a pretty strong voice by the time I finished my undergraduate degree at Duke.

Then, I went to law school. Law school is great at teaching you how to think like a lawyer, but not great at teaching you how to write. I mean, maybe it teaches you to write in a very bland way, which has its own value. Hopefully, if nothing else, you can have clear thoughts, which results in clear writing by the end of law school. But you will sort of have lost whatever voice you probably came into law school with. I then clerked for a year for a federal judge, and most of the judges aren't doing the first drafts of their opinions. The clerk is doing the first draft of their opinions in federal court. So you sort of create your own style to mimic the style of the judge, who you're writing for, who's going to be editing. You adopt their style throughout that year.

I then went to work at a midsized firm in North Carolina. I worked for one of the top appellate lawyers in the state then and now, Matt Sawchak. He had his own voice and his own style, and whatever I wrote was going to be edited heavily to become that style. So you just end up adopting that style, which was a new style that you adopt, right? You're just a young associate. You don't have any clients. You're going to do whatever. You're going to write however you're told to write. And that was good in the sense that Matt had, and still does, a very, not showy, not overly formal style, but very professional. It's a good style. It's one that I still use today, depending on the situation.

I would say I have multiple styles. I have multiple voices now and it depends on the case and it depends on the time to deploy each one. And sometimes I pull out what I think of as the Matt Sawchak style and voice when I need it. I then ended up leaving that firm, joined another firm, and I worked for another Matt this time. His name was Matt Learberg, and he had a more relaxed, more conversational tone and style. And we worked very closely together, and he told me at least that by the end of our time working together, his voice had become a bit like mine, and my voice had become a bit like his. So it was the next sort of phase in my own writing development.

And I just had a longer leash to write how I wanted to. So I think that was probably the first time I really had the opportunity to experiment in what my own legal voice was going to sound like. And that was really helpful. Then, I ended up leaving that firm and now I'm on my own at the Dowling Firm, though it's just me in charge of appeals. It's me, and to the extent I'm working with some other attorneys who might make suggestions, but they rarely have major suggestions on tone or style or voice.

I think I have a pretty distinctive style, at least for our appellate courts. I'm usually

told that it's pretty direct, and I always like to be direct and clear. You don't want to be insultingly direct, but direct enough to be understood. But at the same time, I do think I have a pretty conversational style. I freely use contractions, for example. You can overdo those. Usually I have many contractions in there and I take many of them out, but I'll leave the ones that I think just sound good. I think legal writing should be clear. It's not going to be a pleasure to read. No one is picking up a legal brief to read it because they want to. They're picking it up because that's what they're required to do. Either it's the judge or the justice or his clerks, or her clerks, and they're all reading it, but that doesn't mean that any of them really want to be reading it.

So I like to imagine that I can at least make my writing understandable and not painful to read. You'd be surprised how poor most legal writing is. It's very difficult to understand what someone is saying. I think that oftentimes the problem is you have a lack of clear thinking, and that leads to a lack of clarity in the writing. Those to me go hand to hand. When you see bad writing and you can't understand what they're saying, it could be that they're poor writers. It could be that the idea is pretty underdeveloped or the argument is wrong.

It certainly shows confidence in your position to the court, I would think, if you're very clear. You're not trying to obscure the matter or trying to be confusing. And to be fair, there are times in writing where you might have ambiguity in the writing and it's intentional. I think that a lot of writing is ambiguous, but not intentionally. It's just unclear writing.

But there is a time to shade through some facts or some issues that you might not want to focus on or that you don't think the court needs to focus on. So you might leave those a little less developed. There's a time and a place for that. But by the time you get to oral argument, even for those facts you need to be very well-versed in them, as you might be asked about them by the court. It might not be something you really want to talk about, but you have to.

MC: A moment ago, you mentioned that you clerked for a federal judge at the beginning of your career. I have a couple of questions on that point. First, how does that experience clerking for a federal trial judge play into your appellate career? And second, do you have any broader advice on young people who are thinking about clerking one day?

TS: If you know you want to be an appellate attorney, you should do an appellate clerkship to the extent that you can. But if that's not an option or, it's not the appellate clerkship you'd like to have, you shouldn't say, "Well, I'm not going to clerk at all." My year clerking in the federal district court, which is the federal trial court, was an absolutely wonderful year. I learned a lot about how judges think and how to write. It was a wonderful experience.

To be fair, appellate clerkships can be a little boring. This is what I'm told. In an appellate clerkship, you're usually just in chambers. In federal district court, there are plenty of hearings and trials. During my clerkship, it was a very busy year of

trials, which was a lot of fun. So you have a lot more fun in federal district court than you might in a state appellate clerkship or a federal appellate court clerkship. You only have oral arguments a few times per year if you're in a federal appellate clerkship. I don't know about all the circuits, but the Fourth Circuit sits only six weeks per year because most cases don't get set for argument. By contrast, there are other circuits where almost every case is orally argued. It really depends on what court you're in.

MC: You mentioned that you primarily practice appellate law. So you don't practice appellate law, and then three other different disciplines as well.

TS: That's right.

MC: You specialized in this field, and you became a board-certified appellate practice practitioner. What are the benefits of specializing in appellate law? And also, in case any students are curious about what the certification process is to become a certified practitioner, if you could walk us through that, I would appreciate it.

TS: Some states have developed specialization programs. They have sort of two purposes. One is internally in the bar to reward and recognize practitioners who have a true expertise in some subfield of the law. It's also important from a marketing perspective to be able to advertise to potential clients or people that hire you.

I sometimes distinguish between those things because I'm often hired by law firms, not necessarily by the clients, though I have plenty of direct clients as well.

Sometimes from a business perspective, the law firm is really the business client, and the underlying client is the client where the professional obligations run to. Not every state has an appellate specialization. North Carolina has for several years. I think it may have been one of the first in the nation to have an appellate specialization. It definitely has specializations in other fields going back for decades. So we're a bit of a forerunner in that respect.

The specialization requirements vary by the field. To be specialized in appellate law in North Carolina, you first have to be qualified to even apply for specialization, which is, I would say, three quarters of the battle. You need five oral arguments. You have to devote about a quarter of your practice to appellate practice for four or five years, and you must have ten briefs that you have primarily authored. In North Carolina, usually the hardest part is the oral argument requirement, because, like I said, the Court of Appeals doesn't set a lot of things for oral argument. As a result, it can be very challenging for young lawyers to get the opportunities to do oral arguments, since usually the clients want the more senior attorney to do the argument.

Assuming you meet all those requirements, then you can apply to sit for the specialization exam. Our exam in North Carolina has two parts. There's a multiple choice part and an essay part, and then there is a take-home part that lasts for a

week after that, where you take home a brief that is horribly formatted. It violates all the rules and you have to edit it very heavily and then you have to actually draft part of the argument section. All of that is then graded. And this is not a perfunctory exam. The year I took the exam, there were five of us that sat for the appellate specialization and only two of the five passed. So it's a real exam, to be sure, but people certainly pass every year and if you fail one year, you can take it the next.

MC: You mentioned the oral argument time as one of the most challenging parts of the process. I was speaking to a federal judge in Arkansas a couple of years ago, and he mentioned a new program he was starting where even though he's a district court judge, he would allow young attorneys who wanted more oral argument experience to file *amicus* briefs in cases that he was hearing and then come present for ten minutes in his courtroom. If federal judges adopted that policy here in North Carolina, could that potentially also qualify for oral argument time or does it have to be before an appellate panel?

TS: It does have to be before an appellate panel, but, I mean, young attorneys should look for any opportunity to be in the courtroom. If you get ten minutes to be in front of a federal district court judge, you should take that. It's great practice for being in front of an appellate court. It might have more questions for you than an appellate court. You never really know in an appellate court whether it is, as we call them, hot benches or cold benches. Sometimes cold benches where they don't really have hardly any questions and they're hot benches where, I mean, whatever you came to talk about doesn't matter, but you're here to answer the questions. Generally, my preference is a very hot bench. Otherwise, what was the point? You already knew what I was going to say. You read the briefs and I don't have anything new.

MC: Did you participate in Moot Court in law school, out of curiosity?

TS: I actually didn't. Let me take a moment to explain this to your listeners. In law school, they have many sorts of extracurricular programs. One is called the Law Review, where you are editing and preparing a legal journal. It's usually professors that are publishing their articles and you are assisting them. It's a student-run organization. You choose the articles that you're going to publish and then you have to edit and prepare those articles for publication.

I was on the Law Review. There's also Moot Court. Moot Court is a competition where you write briefs—sort of fake briefs for a fake appellate court—and then you go present a fake oral argument to a fake panel of appellate judges. At Carolina [UNC Chapel Hill], if you're on the Law Review, you're not allowed to do Moot Court.

Because of the publication schedule for the Law Review, frankly, I wouldn't have had any time to do Moot Court. That's not true at most or maybe any other law school that I'm aware of, as you can usually do both. It certainly would have been helpful to do Moot Court, but I was unable to.

Thankfully, it all worked out in the end anyways. You know, you wouldn't look at

the path I took and say, “Oh yes, he's clearly going to be an appellate attorney.” But I always had an interest in appellate work. But for personal circumstances, I probably would have done a second clerkship at an appellate court. I certainly had the opportunity to do so. I was engaged. I was married at that point while I was clerking. My wife is a veterinarian and if I was going to go do an appellate clerkship, I was going to have to go live somewhere else for a year and move around. Usually when you're applying for clerkships, people apply to all sorts of places. But I limited myself just to North Carolina and to be frank, I was ready to just go into private practice.

I had worked one summer at the firm that I ended up going to, and I was looking forward to going there and I had some student loans to pay off too.

MC: That sounds like a wonderful journey. My family and I live on a horse farm here and we love North Carolina. I certainly intend to practice here myself.

TS: It's a nice place. I've only ever practiced in North Carolina. I very nearly left the state when I was in law school. I had offers up in Washington, D.C. So I was mostly trying to decide, do I want to be in Raleigh or do I want to be in Washington, D.C? I was very lucky to have gotten those offers, but I ended up turning them down, which some people thought I was crazy for doing.

But I'm not really a big city kind of guy and didn't think I would want to be up there for very long. It's not really conducive to having a family. So I ended up staying here in Raleigh. I had several friends who all went up to D.C. They've all moved back to Raleigh now. And when they were ready to move back to Raleigh, they called me. I helped them find jobs here in Raleigh. There are many paths.

MC: It sounds like you had a wonderful experience at UNC Law School. Do you have any advice for students who are trying to decide which law school to go to? Are there different factors that they should consider or anything else in that regard?

TS: Yes. Some of the things that I think guided my decision might be helpful to other students.

First of all, it might be surprising to some of my friends who know me, but I wasn't sure I wanted to be in private practice. I was sure I didn't want to be in private practice before I went to law school. I thought that I might want to be a federal prosecutor. And so I did not want to go to a law school where I knew I was going to come out with a ton of debt. I graduated mostly debt free. I was very interested in Carolina because I could get in-state tuition. There are scholarships available on top of that. I knew any debt I graduated with would be pretty manageable and it would not determine where I had to work.

Now, of course, I ended up going into private practice, but had I gone to a school where I graduated with hundreds of thousands of dollars in debt, I probably wouldn't have stayed in Raleigh. I probably would have taken those Big Law jobs up in D.C because they pay much more. I would have needed that to pay off the debt more quickly. Because that is something to think about. It's the debt and what job

you might like to have.

Another consideration is, where do you want to live and practice when you finish law school? Many of the best lawyers in the state graduated from UNC. It's a very natural place to live and to work after you graduate from the school. But UNC also has great name recognition all the way up to New York if you want to be on the East Coast. I knew that UNC was a good school, and I wasn't sure at the time that I wanted to be in North Carolina. Like I said, I thought there was a good chance I wanted to be in D.C. And so UNC didn't shut the doors for me to be in any of those places.

But that's another thing to think about: by going to a particular school, what doors am I opening and closing for myself? Of course, if you go to school like Harvard, that can open more doors. But actually, that can be a little bit tricky, for example, in North Carolina. I had friends who went to Duke Law and they had trouble getting jobs in North Carolina because most employers didn't think that they were very serious

about staying in North Carolina. Very few Duke Law graduates end up staying in the state. Most are not from here and never intended to practice here, which makes sense.

As they say, it's the Ivy League of the South. If you go to Harvard Law, you're probably not intending to practice in Cambridge. That said, both of my partners at our three-man firm went to Duke Law School. So you can clearly stay here and practice.

But it is not just, "Oh, I didn't go to a very good school and it was in Idaho, and now I want to practice in North Carolina," which could be tricky. Employers ask, when you are applying for jobs, "Why do you want to be in North Carolina?" If your resume shows some other connections to North Carolina, you might be fine—if you're from here, for example. But keep in mind what story your resume is telling future employers.

There were some things that I considered but didn't ultimately sway me. For example, Wake Forest University was really close to where I grew up, and they had an appellate law clinic, which was really cool. A clinic is like a non-profit law firm that operates out of a law school. But ultimately I just didn't want to be that close to where I grew up.

So I didn't end up going to Wake. I've now become friends with the clinic director over there, Professor John Korzen. So if any of your listeners are considering Wake Forest, it is a wonderful school, with a wonderful appellate clinic. Duke also has an appellate clinic. UNC, as far as I know, still doesn't have an appellate clinic. It would have been nice. Some students absolutely should consider the clinic opportunities. Like I said, I didn't do one. I had friends who did. They had great experiences.

If you know that you have a strong interest in a particular type of law, law schools

have these clinics. And so that's something else that you should consider.

It shouldn't be a determinative factor. I think it's less important than the other factors, but it's something to think about.

MC: You also participate as an appellate attorney in a wide variety of pro bono activities. For example, you co-founded North Carolina's state appellate pro bono program, along with then-Judge Dietz on the Court of Appeals, who now serves on the North Carolina Supreme Court. Would you mind telling us a little bit more about that program and why you believe that it is valuable for an appellate lawyer to engage in pro bono work?

TS: When I was maybe two or three years out, I wanted to do more appellate work. And of course, then you want to do oral arguments and you realize there's not a lot of opportunities. So I started researching all the opportunities for arguments and found there were very few.

And then out of the blue, I got a call from Sylvia Novinsky, who runs the Pro Bono Resource Center here in North Carolina, and she used to head a pro bono program at UNC Law, so we already had a good relationship. And she said, "Judge Dietz has contacted me and we're thinking about putting together an appellate pro bono program in the state. Would you be interested in helping with that?" And I said, "Absolutely."

That took us a few years to get off the ground, but it's been great. When I was there, my focus was on making the program work as well as possible for young attorneys who want to get appellate experience, because to me, that's a critical part of the program. I consider the program to have three purposes. One, help young, blossoming appellate attorneys get appellate experience; two, help unrepresented litigants get good representation; and three, help the courts, because when they have an unrepresented person in front of them, the briefing is generally not helpful.

We created an arrangement with the Court that said, "If you take one of these cases in the program, you will set it for oral argument." And so it helps everyone. I got at least one or two cases through the program myself after I founded it. I ended up doing at least a few other pro bono appeals outside of the program as well. I had one somewhat prominent case I took from our state Court of Appeals to the state Supreme Court which involved a state constitutional claim. We ended up prevailing and set an important precedent in the state.

A lot of law firms are very supportive of their young attorneys doing pro bono work. Your listeners might not know, but there's usually a certain number of billable hours that are required of attorneys. Often large law firms will count a certain amount of pro bono hours toward that billable hour requirement. So you have no one to blame but yourself if you're not out there doing some of that pro bono work. It's good work to do for people. It's a good experience for the attorney. I mean, my pro bono work ended up leading to several paying jobs because it was a very prominent case. I've worked on several matters that spun off from the recognition that came from just that pro bono case.

MC: Some people might not think of pro bono work when they think of appellate attorneys because they usually imagine it at the trial level. Why do you think it's also very valuable to have pro bono work at the appellate level as well in addition to the reasons that you just mentioned?

TS: When you are a young attorney, at the trial level, you know, even at a small or large firm, there might be small matters where they just have the young attorney run with it, which is fine. That almost never happens for an appeal at a law firm. They're not going to hand it off to some young attorney normally and say, "Run with it." But if you have an appellate pro bono matter, you can really be in charge of yourself. It's yours. And hopefully you have some mentors either within the firm or outside the firm that you can and should consult as you're working on it because there are a lot of rules and you're not going to know them all.

But it's a great opportunity to have your own client, your own case and make your own decisions and that's a very different feeling than when you're really working for a senior attorney who's making all of the decisions. Here, it's up to you. Go make the decisions because that's what will be your own life eventually. When you become an older attorney, you will be that person. It's just up to you. It turns out there's really no one else to ask that makes the decisions. The buck stops with you.

MC: In addition to your pro bono work, you are also the president of the Federalist Society Chapter here in the Triangle area. When did you first become involved in the Federalist Society and what value do you see in becoming a part of that organization as an appellate lawyer and a lawyer more generally?

TS: Almost every law school today has a chapter of the Federalist Society. Ours at UNC was mostly inactive when I was there. To the extent that I was a member, I didn't fully know what membership meant. I went to some lunch events, and that made me a member, I suppose.

We didn't have a particularly active chapter when I graduated here in Raleigh. It started becoming active, and I started going to more events, and got to know the former president. We ended up actually working together at my prior firm, and then she became busy and she had to hand over the reins to someone else. And I was a natural person to pick those up and run with it, in part because appellate work and the Federalist Society really go hand in hand. Appellate attorneys are the nerds of the bar. We are the people sitting, reading, writing, and researching all day long.

The Federalist Society is not as nerdy as being an appellate litigator, but it is on the nerdier edge, because it consists of people who love the law and have an interest in a lot of different legal fields. When I plan events, they often focus on administrative law and constitutional issues. But even within that, there's a ton of variety—criminal, civil, and everything in between. It's a fun organization to be a part of. The Federalist Society is a group of conservative lawyers, but our panels are always well balanced. Our membership expects a very free exchange of ideas. And that's what we want.

The Federalist Society doesn't take positions on legal issues, but we do, I'd say,

foster discussion on legal issues that we think are important. If it's as easy as just going to a few meetings once you're a lawyer, why wouldn't you become involved? As a lawyer, you also need what we call continuing legal education credit. And you get those by going to our meetings. You have to have a certain number of those hours every year and you usually get a free lunch by going to ours!

It's a fun group. You make good friends that way, so I think some people get into it for networking. I get into it for the camaraderie and because I'm a nerd. I don't know that there's a lot of true business networking that goes on, though there can be. If you're especially looking at government jobs, not so much here in North Carolina, but in states where, for example, you might have a Republican Governor, it can be very valuable. For example, in Florida, there's a very tight relationship between the Governor and the Federalist Society.

At the federal level, there's certainly a strong relationship, though a complicated one, between the President and the White House—depending on who's in the White House—and the Federalist Society. If you're a conservative attorney, it's an important organization to be a part of, but not just for your career advancement. No matter what, I think you'll find it to be a fun, enjoyable organization.

MC: We will include a link to your appellate newsletter,² which I strongly recommend, in this interview, but are there any sources on appellate law that you think students should start reading if they want to learn more about this field?

TS: It's a good question. An excellent thing to read is high-quality appellate writing. Sometimes that's judicial opinions, though not usually (not because judicial writing is bad per se, but you're not a judge and it's a different style of writing). If you're working in a state court system, find out who the top appellate lawyers are in your state. Pull their briefs, look at them. I was really blessed to have mentors who were some of the top appellate lawyers in the state, and I owe my career to them and what I learned from them, both in terms of writing and strategy.

But you can also look at the federal level. For example, you can look up some of the best briefs filed at the U.S. Supreme Court. You can look at, for example, a Paul Clement brief or listen to a Paul Clement oral argument. Now, most people are not Paul Clement. You're not going to match his skill—but you can improve from following his argument style.

I'm a complete nerd and while I don't listen to all of the oral arguments in the U.S. Supreme Court, I listen to a lot of them. You can download them like a podcast and I do that. When I am working on something else at home, I throw it on. Those are all helpful. It can be fun, of course, to listen to some of the various podcasts that follow the Supreme Court. There's several good legal podcasts out there now. That wasn't really that true when I graduated law school; now there are a bunch. People enjoy different ones for different reasons.

In most states, you have the State Bar, which regulates lawyers. Then you usually

² <https://us18.campaign-archive.com/home/?u=bf5486fb9faae6b2dd3db4ebd&id=7fed22d8bd>.

have the Bar Association, which is a separate nonprofit entity. Most State Bar Associations are broken up into sections based on different types of the law. North Carolina has its own appellate section. I would advise any young attorney to get involved with the appellate section. Just reach out to the leadership, and ask, “What can I do?” They're always desperate for volunteers. They'd usually be happy to give you something to do, would be my guess.

I'm now on the Appellate Rules Committee, which is a different organization, but it helps write and revise the rules of procedure for our state appellate courts. So that is definitely an important thing for a young attorney who's looking to do more. You should definitely reach out to your State Bar Association.

MC: Thank you very much for your time!

TS: Of course. Thank you for having me.