

News

# People First – Groom’s Kelly Geloneck Discusses the Pillars of Her Client Work

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Groom of counsel [Kelly Geloneck](#) wanted to be a lawyer by age four. Here, she talks about the inspiration behind her younger self’s career goals and the mentors that have influenced her along the way.

## When did you know you wanted to be an attorney?

My grandfather was a corporate litigator in Seattle. At age four, I went to visit him at his office, sat behind his desk and declared I “was going to be a lawyer.” I had little idea at the time what a lawyer actually did, but I remember being impressed by the professionalism of his office, his high-backed chair, and the glass paperweight on his desk. When my grandfather passed away, we heard from many of his former colleagues and clients and they talked about how he was known for facing difficult problems with a keen understanding of how he could help the people behind them. Those comments always resonated with me and I chose to be an attorney for much the same reason – to work in a field where I could tackle difficult problems, but with an ultimate focus on people and their needs – and I have been lucky enough to do just that at Groom. On my desk at work, I keep a picture of my grandfather and me during that first visit to his office and his paperweight is right next to it. Both items help remind me that the people in my practice come first.

## What leader or leaders do you look up to and why?

I look up to leaders that make a point of promoting and building up the careers of those below them. I have been lucky to work with many people at the USC, Penn, Mercer and now Groom, who made it a point to offer me opportunities both within and outside the workplace that have helped me grow personally and professionally. When I think of the moments I’m most proud of in my career, those moments are usually a result of someone above me pushing me out of my comfort zone or introducing me to a new group or opportunity they think will be beneficial for me.

I also admire those who make the time to teach others in a proactive, positive manner. One of our Groom principals, [Liz Dold](#), does this exceptionally well. I spent many nights as an associate in Liz's office, reviewing a procedure, regulation or piece of technical work product. Liz always takes the time to show you she is just as invested in your work as you are, regardless of how busy she is. She is a wonderful teacher and often asks, "Have you thought about X?" rather than pointing out something that has been overlooked. This method of coaching really had a positive impact on me as I broached learning an extremely technical area of the law.

## **How are you currently developing professionally?**

I am currently honing my own management style to be mindful of creating opportunities – not just for myself but also for others. As I move forward in my career, I have to be more proactive and deliberate about carving out work opportunities for more junior attorneys to help them develop the substantive and technical skills that are the basis of client work. It sometimes seems easier to say, "I'll just take care of this," but I remind myself that each time that happens, I'm taking away a learning opportunity from another colleague and a chance to develop my own leadership skills.