

CJ Griffin Featured in New Jersey Law Journal Article on the Pandemic's Effect on Personal and Professional Lives

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CJ Griffin, partner and Director of the Justice Gary S. Stein Public Interest Center at Pashman Stein Walder Hayden, was featured in the New Jersey Law Journal article, "Lawyers Anticipating the New Normal Call Post-Boundary Life a 'Gift and a Curse.'" The article features the perspectives of three attorneys on the pandemic's effect on personal and professional lives.

CJ Griffin, a litigation partner at Pashman Stein Walder Hayden in Hackensack and director of the firm's Justice Gary S. Stein Public Interest Center, said her commute from Jersey City used to range from 30 to 60 minutes each way—she used to get in to the office around 8:15 a.m. and would stay until 6:45 p.m. in order to miss rush-hour traffic. That often meant missing dinner time with her family.

"Now I can throw a chicken in the oven at 4:30," Griffin said.

"I always make this joke that, in January 2020, my new year's resolution was to work from home more—so, sorry, I ruined it for the whole country," she said. There "was always some sort of reason to go in—personal meeting, better technology," she said, but now, "I, in general, like working from home and I actually feel more connected to people."

"In terms of actual work life, I don't think I missed a beat," she explained. "If anything, I feel more connected to my clients and to my client base, and to other advocates who are doing the kind of work that I am doing."

That's because, pre-COVID, Griffin would have maybe a few phone calls per week, and "now it's just so easy to have Zoom meetings," including numerous standing meetings and meetings with potential

clients, she said.

“I feel like my practice has elevated in a way,” Griffin said. “I definitely feel it has changed my practice, and I’m more connected. ... I can’t imagine going back.”

“The part of work that I miss is more the social” aspect, with an ideal situation being mostly working from home with periodic social collaboration in the office or another in-person setting, said Griffin, who admitted that, before March 2020, “my own office space was kind of my away time” and “I appreciated going to work.”

Life is different on the home front, too, and for the better.

“I eat dinner with my family. I can eat breakfast with my family. I can go on walks. I can shut down from work easier”—though that last part took some doing, she said. “It’s hard to imagine being able to juggle it all going back to the old normal. ... I hope there really is a new normal.”

Griffin said she isn’t particularly concerned about eroding boundaries.

Early on, “you almost literally couldn’t leave your house, so even if I had [the] intention not to work on the weekend, what else am I going to do?” Griffin has moved past that and gotten better about separating, but because she is engaged with her practice and her clients, working at different times isn’t an imposition, she said.

Indeed, that is another thing that Griffin, West and Muccifori all have in common.

“I just really love what I do,” Griffin said.

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