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May 2015 E-newsletter Alumni Spotlight: Karri L. Palmetier (J.D.'96)

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Name: Karri L. Palmetier
Title: Assistant General Counsel
Employer Name: United Launch Alliance
Location: Denver, Colorado
Number of years in this position or with this employer: 8
Georgia Law graduation year: 1996
Other degree / institution / year: B.A. / The American University / 1993

1. Why did you choose to attend the University of Georgia School of Law?

UGA is a top-tier school with an excellent international law program. The facts that it was affordable and gave a scholarship were icing on the cake.

2. Who was your favorite Georgia Law professor? Why?

Dan Coenen. He most influenced the fundamental characteristics of a lawyer. We had to be well prepared for his class and had to learn to think carefully. I can still remember him hitting his knee against the front wall whenever we jumped to a conclusion.

3. What is your most memorable experience from your time at Georgia Law?

I enjoyed my summer studying European law in Brussels with Professor Wilner's program.

4. Where was your favorite place to study during law school?

My apartment.

5. What was your favorite thing about living in Athens?

Food, music, the school – it is a quintessential college town. The close proximity to Atlanta was a bonus.

6. What advice would you give to a current law school student?

Don't take shortcuts but challenge yourself to learn from the hardest professors and try to obtain all the practical experience you can even if it is not in your intended field.

7. Please briefly describe your current position at United Launch Alliance.

I am one of five attorneys supporting the company in manufacturing and launching the Atlas V and Delta IV launch vehicles as well as developing a new launch vehicle. My primary practice area is government contracts but, like any in-house counsel, I am expected to advise in a wide variety of areas.

8. What do you enjoy most about your job? What is the most rewarding aspect?

Being part of a team finding solutions to complicated issues and having the opportunity to mentor. We have an amazing group of employees who make it all worthwhile – not to mention that our small law department operates like a close family in supporting each other.

9. What made you decide to be a lawyer?

I didn't decide as much as happened into it. Initially, I just wanted a secondary degree. I eventually started to love the profession as I practiced it.

10. What is the most interesting case you have encountered in your practice (if applicable)?

I recently worked on several high profile cases worth billions each in which I learned the power of the press and social media on the judicial process.

11. What do you do to handle the stress of your work? How do you relax after a stressful day?

Relaxing in front of the fire, exercising and cuddling my two very spoiled cats.

12. What advice would you give to someone working in your field?

Understand your customers and their challenges. One of the biggest errors made by government contract lawyers is assuming that the government is intentionally trying to harm a company.

13. What do you enjoy doing during your free time? What are your hobbies?

Cooking gourmet meals and converting food from our garden into amazing meals, reading all types of fiction and hiking the Colorado trails.

14. If you could share an afternoon with anyone, with whom would you choose to spend it?

My life partner, George Sowers. He is an amazing man who rejuvenates and excites me.

16. How do you stay up to date on legal issues and trends?

I read a lot – magazines, legal discussion forums, news clippings and various CLE trainings.

17. What book/resource do you find yourself referencing the most?

The Internet – I can find anything.

18. When you look out your office window, what do you see?

Light rail station and I-25.

