

Passion for politics, hard work and a humble beginning drive Rose

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Jordan Rose said she still thinks about “the closet.” Back when she was first starting out, a year and a half after finishing law school at Arizona State University in 1996, she remembers working out of a storage closet that another attorney had converted into an office.

“He had a desk in it, which was great, because I didn’t know any better,” she recalled with a laugh. “I had to kind of shimmy between file cabinets to get behind it.”

At the time, Rose was handling small cases — zoning cases for a dry cleaning business or a hair salon, she said.

Now, the Rose Law Group has 43 people and she’s involved in several big political cases, including a federal suit involving SB1070 — the state’s immigration law, the proposed Indian casino near Glendale, medical marijuana cases, and the Republican redistricting group FAIR Trust.

But Rose, 40, said she uses those roots as a motivator. “I think about the closet every day, and how I don’t want to go back there,” she said.

She estimates that she makes about nine times what she did in those early years. And so far, she said, her firm has not lost a major case.

When it came to the more high-profile cases, however, Rose said her reasoning was selfish.

“I didn’t want to have to come to work and do boring stuff,” she said. “So the concept was, we will be involved in every major public policy and legal issue that comes down the pike for the next 100 years.”

Part of the appeal was her passion for politics. Rose said that she had always been a “news junkie,” and loved following what elected officials were doing.

Her big break came when she was working on zoning, land use and real estate cases in Pinal County. Because it was, at the time, the fastest-growing county in the nation, the amount of cases her firm was handling kept them afloat.

But one day in 2006, Rose remembers looking at the rising price of land in growing community of Maricopa and realizing that starter homes were soon going to be selling for \$420,000 based on land prices. At that point she said she saw the writing on the wall.

“It was the height of the market. We were loving life,” she said. “But we realized we really needed to diversify.”

At that point, she began beefing up her business litigation practice and constitutional litigation, and started getting involved in renewable energy cases.

She said it wasn’t a gamble — the Corporation Commission had approved the Renewable Energy Standard and Tariff, which required that energy providers had to get 15 percent of their energy from renewable sources by 2025. And the assumption that if the real estate bubble burst, there would be need for litigators to resolve disputes was “not rocket science,” she said.

But Clint Bolick, director of the Goldwater Institute’s Scharf-Norton Center for Constitutional Litigation and a personal friend of Rose’s, said that being able to take a look at the market and make such a call is a rarity in the legal profession.

Most observers would have expected her to stay with real estate, Bolick said. “A typical law firm will remain in its comfort zone until it’s forced out of it,” he added.

The evolution and expansion of her firm has not gone unnoticed by Bolick, whose son will be joining Rose’s firm as an associate attorney, or other observers.

Corporation Commission Chairman Gary Pierce, who Rose named as one of her political inspirations, said that her aptitude for business and work ethic always struck him.

“Nowadays, you turn around and say, ‘Oh, Jordan’s



Jordan Rose started her firm with a focus on zoning cases but has grown it to become a major player in Arizona politics.

doing that, too. And that, too. Jordan’s firm is representing that group, and that group,” he said. “And she got there because she works hard. She’s unafraid to do what it takes to ethically advocate the positions she’s been hired to take.”

Of course, being married to one of the Valley’s most influential PR hounds, Jason Rose, doesn’t hurt.

Phoenix attorney Lisa Hauser, who like Rose has worked on many high-profile cases, points out that having the built-in PR adviser has been a significant contribution to Rose’s success.

“With her husband having a public relations firm, it just doesn’t get much better than that in terms of being able to get a name for yourself and the right kind of exposure,” she said. “Obviously, it’s always helpful to make sure people know who you are.”

But Bolick says that anyone who believes Rose is only as successful as she has been because of her husband is utterly wrong.

“You could sit Jordan in a room with Jason nowhere to be found, and that knack is still there,” he said. “It’s very instinctive for her, and that’s unique. It’s not something they teach you in law school.”

Her involvement in the political issues, Rose said, was in most cases a natural extension of the work she was already doing.

Her involvement in the SB1070 lawsuit filed by the ACLU stemmed from the high profile relationship she had already built in Pinal County. Sheriff Paul Babeu, who was a defendant in the case, contacted her and asked if she would be interested in representing him and Cochise County Sheriff Larry Dever in the lawsuit.

She agreed, and both men consulted with their county attorneys. The Pinal County Attorney, James Walsh, refused to let Babeu retain outside counsel, but Cochise County Attorney Edward Rheinheimer gave Dever the OK.

Similarly, the medical marijuana cases came to her

without her seeking them. At the time the initiative had been sent to the ballot and was awaiting voter approval, a philanthropist client came to her and offered to pay her firm’s research to make recommendations to the Department of Health Services regarding how to best implement the program.

Now, Rose advises clients on issues like zoning or applying for a dispensary license.

Meanwhile, her firm is also representing the city of Glendale in their suit to stop the Tohono O’odham Nation from building a \$500 million casino at 95th and Northern avenues. Her representation in that case came as a natural extension of other cases she had handled for the city, including some transportation issues and a bid to keep the Phoenix Coyotes from leaving.

Her firm’s most recent involvement is with FAIR Trust, a group put together by Republican politicians in Arizona to represent GOP interests at the Independent Redistricting Commission.

Despite the big cases, Rose said her most rewarding case was defending The Coach House in Scottsdale back in 2000 after the city had decided to condemn it. At the time, Rose was writing columns for *The Arizona Republic* and the owner, Jim Brower, contacted her after she had published a glowing review of the old tavern.

“At the time I was just too dumb to know that this was crazy,” she said, “but I said, ‘Why don’t we fight for it then?’”

They launched a campaign to save The Coach House, bringing hundreds of people to the City Council meetings to beg the members to save the tavern. Now, The Rose Law Group holds its holiday party there every year.

When asked what she considers her firm’s “bread and butter” nowadays, she replies that they don’t have one — and that’s their strength.

“We’re so broad-based that if one area fails, we’ll be OK,” she said. “That’s something that anyone involved with anything having to do with real estate learned.”