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Nicole M. Magdziak

Building Connections in Real Estate and Land Use Law

When Day Pitney Partner Nicole Magdziak was a young child, she often visited the Ledgewood Mall in her hometown of Roxbury, New Jersey. In recent years, the mall went the way of so many others and became an empty shell of its former self.

Now residing in a neighboring town with her husband and son, she often visits the newly revamped "The Shops at Ledgewood Commons," and feels pride for the role she played in transforming the 470,000 square foot plaza which reopened in 2020 as an open-air shopping center with nationally known anchor stores among its mix of tenants offering shopping and dining experiences.

"This was a meaningful project that is near and dear to my heart," says the real estate law attorney. "Assisting our client to obtain land use approvals to transform the mall from what it was when I was a child to what it is today was a very rewarding experience."

Nicole has spent her entire legal career at Day Pitney, including working at the firm as a summer associate while earning her law degree at Seton Hall University School of Law. She helps real estate developers, property owners and corporations with development and redevelopment projects. Her practice includes land use, zoning and redevelopment, as well as acquisitions and dispositions of property.

It is an area of law that blossomed from her love of the intersection of environmental science and land development, which began in high school after being introduced to the field by her teacher, Dale Weaver. "She always encouraged the notion that you can develop land in a way that respects the environment and community," Nicole says of Dale, with whom she is still in communication.

This passion continued as Nicole furthered her education at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill, where she earned a degree in environmental science, taking courses that provided her with a background in mapping, regional planning and community impact.

In law school, her New Jersey Land Use professor was the chair of a local zoning board. He demonstrated the real life practice of land use law by requiring the class to evaluate and discuss development applications from both the applicant and board perspective. Nicole enjoyed the collaborative nature of that process and says working with others to solve problems is her favorite part of her practice—especially working with clients and municipalities toward a common goal. "Even if all parties don't agree with all aspects of a development along the way, I work diligently to find middle ground to advance a project while prioritizing the clients' best interests," she says.

Nicole has a unique ability to forge relationships with municipal authorities, which is valuable in ensuring projects move forward, says client Stephen Santola, general counsel at Woodmont Properties. "Nicole has an outstanding demeanor for the business world," Stephen says. "She is extraordinarily bright, always thinking a step ahead, has creative solutions and is enormously responsive."

Mark Pottschmidt of Stanbery Development says that Nicole's understanding of local land use laws, coupled with her experience with local officials, was very helpful recently for a mixed-use project that included 498 residential units, 100 hotel rooms and 60,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space. "Nicole proved to be an efficient and effective conductor of our

overall development team orchestrating the preparation, execution and ultimately, the approval of our very complicated mixed-use project," he adds.

Nicole's mother was a real estate agent and an administrative assistant to a home builder while Nicole and her twin brother were children. Her father was the Deputy General Manager of the New Jersey Transit Light Rail System, having worked his way up the ranks after starting with New Jersey Transit as a teenager. "My parents are the most influential people in my life," she says, remembering how both worked hard, were dedicated and passionate—all qualities they instilled in Nicole and her brother at a young age. Professionally, these same qualities were furthered by her Day Pitney mentors, Kate Coffey, Craig Gianetti, Thomas Malman and Peter Wolfson, as she has grown as an attorney. As a new mom, Nicole plans to set a similar example for her son.

Outside work, Nicole enjoys following her beloved UNC Tar Heels basketball, traveling to Major League Baseball stadiums, of which she's been to 22, and spending time with her family in the Adirondacks and the Jersey Shore.

REAL ESTATE AND LAND USE

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