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Catherine Dugan O'Connor

Seizing the Day

It was her Groundhog Day moment. Catherine Dugan O'Connor was just out of law school and clerking for a federal judge when she found herself reviewing what seemed like the same arguments in a time loop, repeating again and again.

An author had filed a \$15 million lawsuit over the premise of the movie Groundhog Day – where Bill Murray wakes up every day to relive the same events. The author claimed the movie had copied the idea from a book he'd written. As Judge Denny Chin's law clerk, O'Connor spent weeks poring over both book and movie versions of essentially the same story. "At one point, it really got to be like the same day repeating itself," O'Connor said.

It's a theme that has come up again and again in O'Connor's work. Early in her career, she worked mainly on large intellectual property cases, which can be grueling and take years to resolve. Yet, O'Connor credits these experiences with expanding her knowledge of IP law and sharpening her analytical and writing skills.

Flashing forward, as a Day Pitney partner, O'Connor's typical day is anything but repetitive. In addition to IP litigation, she now focuses on IP counseling and strategy for clients ranging from start-ups to large multinational corporations, such as the LEGO Group of companies. O'Connor helps clients identify, protect and enforce their IP rights, including trademarks. She also advises clients regarding marketing and promotion law, assisting with their sweepstakes and contest promotions, an area of interest to O'Connor, who studied Marketing as an undergraduate at the UConn School of Business. "Working with clients to protect their creative assets means there is always a new challenge," says O'Connor.

"I appreciate her ability to succinctly explain all options with regard to the decisions we make concerning our IP and the challenges we sometimes face," says one client, Susan Criscione, Innovation and IP coordinator for cosmetics manufacturer Mana Products. "She covers all the bases."

O'Connor enjoys applying lessons from her past to help clients navigate today's fast-paced business and legal environments. Whether it is tapping into her undergraduate studies, harkening back to her clerking days with Judge Chin or applying the lessons from her legal practice, she seeks to provide thoughtful yet timely advice to clients, who are often faced with deadlines of their own. "Helping clients solve problems is the best part of my job."

O'Connor also enjoys volunteering at her church, spending time with her two children and helping at their schools.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND TECHNOLOGY

St. John's University School of Law, J.D., summa cum laude, 1995

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