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Chicago Lawyer Helps Fashion Meet Law

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Fashion designers are always on their guard for the fashion police. Sometimes they take on both roles. Although what's fashionable may be a matter of opinion, it's fashion lawyers that manage the apparel facts: customs, domestic and international business law, intellectual property, labor laws, licensing and trademarks.



(Photo Courtesy of Shara Kamal, Esq.)

For lawyers interested in apparel and branding, the combination creates a unique opportunity. "When I was in undergrad, I started out as a fashion major," said Shara Kamal, Esq. "I was quickly told, 'No, that's a hobby. Don't focus on that. Do something that's going to make money.'"

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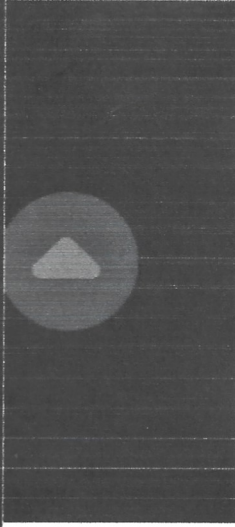
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After graduating from Columbia College with a focus in entertainment and business management, one of her instructors encouraged her to consider law school. She did just that, earning a law degree from John Marshall Law School with a focus in real estate and international business.

"I got my broker's license to sell real estate. Business was coming in like water. All of those relationships that I had developed really panned out for me, and I was able to get started with a high-volume, real estate closing practice."

But during the real estate scare in 2008, Kamal had to make a decision about what direction she'd go in. The employment and real estate downturn affected the economy in the worst way, but it gave the managing attorney a second opportunity to pursue entertainment and fashion law for her own firm. *Where Fashion Meets Law (WFML)*

"I decided that I would return to an area that I was really so passionate about and market all of my services to a different industry. I targeted boutique owners and designers who were looking to open up their own shops and expand their businesses. Since the market has picked up again, I still find myself servicing real estate investors, but a large segment of my client base is now fashion designers, entertainers, authors and musicians."

Kamal highly recommends that aspiring lawyers take on topics that helped her become an effective attorney: client management, ethics and business management. Networking is tops on her list, too.

"It's important to establish strong relationships not only with your professors but also with your colleagues in law school. If you're interested in opening your own practice don't be afraid. You're never going to know it all. Just arm yourself with good counsel."

Shamontel L. Vaughn is a professional journalist who has work featured in AXS, Yahoo!, Chicago Defender and Chicago Tribune. She's been an Examiner since 2009 and currently writes about 10 categories on Examiner.com.

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