

# Fatima Bolyea

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Bolyea specializes in complex commercial litigation, health care law and shareholder disputes. She recently assisted with briefing a key membership oppression issue in *Frank v Linkner* before the Michigan Supreme Court. Bolyea also helped secure a \$2.1-million recovery for an oppressed shareholder. She has appeared on the "Practical Law" television program to discuss physician peer review and was a speaker for the ICLE Annual Health Law Institute.

## What does practicing law mean to you personally and professionally?

I was very young when I decided I wanted to be a lawyer. At the time, I did not know what attorneys actually did, but I knew I wanted to "help people," and when I told this to my mother, she said, "if you want to help people, go to law school." As time went on, my idea of "helping people" changed and evolved, including by convincing myself for a period

of time that I should become a politician. Just as my idea of helping people changed, so did my idea of politics, and I soon realized it was not my cup of tea! Since going to law school and becoming a lawyer, I now know that "helping" comes in all shapes and sizes. Being in a position that allows me to provide this type of assistance to my clients brings me great joy and fulfillment. I am helping people, and I love it!

## Where did you grow up? Please provide one memorable anecdote about your childhood.

I grew up in the southern part of Warren, Michigan. Growing up in that area, I had many friends whose parents had to work on Thanksgiving and Christmas, or who did not have relationships with their parents. Beginning in my early teens and continuing until she passed away in 2013, my mother would invite these friends, and others who did not have somewhere to go for the holidays, over to our house for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

## You travel back in time to law school, and you find your law school self sitting in the library. Knowing what you know now, what advice would you give to yourself?

When I started law school, I was self-conscious about my background. It felt like all the other students came from good neighborhoods and well-connected families. I sometimes felt like an imposter.



If I could go back in time, I would tell myself to stop comparing myself to others, and focus not on what I felt I was lacking, but on all the wonderful things I brought to the table. Every person has a unique story to share, myself included.

## Name an ambitious goal that you would like to accomplish in your career.

First and foremost, I would like to one day become a partner at the firm. In addition to this, I would like

to utilize my knowledge and privilege to help individuals in my community. My husband is a veteran, and I hear far too often how the needs of veterans and their families go unmet and overlooked. I would like to start a program or clinic one day to assist military veterans and their families with their legal needs.

## How would you describe yourself in one word?

Determined