

# My Opera And Baseball Careers Make Me A Better Lawyer

By **Adam Unger** (July 3, 2025)

*In this Expert Analysis series, attorneys discuss how their unusual extracurricular activities enhance professional development, providing insights and pointers that translate to the office, courtroom and beyond. If you have a hobby you would like to write about, email [expertanalysis@law360.com](mailto:expertanalysis@law360.com).*

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At a recent prominent sports industry conference, a question was posed to each of the audience members: What would we do if our jobs were eliminated by artificial intelligence?

For me, the answer was easy. I would sing. The moderator asked me to stand up in front of the audience and give a demonstration, and I happily complied.

As an operatic baritone whose singing has been featured in the New York Post and on Fox 5 New York, I am accustomed to performing for an audience. I have been a featured singer with the Metropolitan Opera Guild and a second-prize winner in the New York Lyric Opera Theatre competition at Carnegie Hall.



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Performing in front of a crowd comes naturally to me not just through my background as an opera singer, but also because I'm a former professional baseball player.

While I am as comfortable in an opera hall as I am in a contract negotiation, I am equally comfortable in a baseball stadium. I was the New York Yankees' 29th-round draft pick in the 2003 MLB draft. I played second base and shortstop for the Yankees and Colorado Rockies in the minor leagues, and have served as a professional baseball coach.

While these interests seem disparate, this conference was one of many examples of how my outside interests both bolster and enhance my legal career.

I am also a member of After Arts, a community for professionals with an interest and background in the arts. The group organizes themed concerts and networking events, including one I recently participated in that featured former athletes who are also musicians. I had the opportunity to discuss all three of my careers, concluding with a concert where I sang opera alongside a former NFL player.

On any given day, I may start at my office participating in negotiations or drafting purchase agreements, then wrap things up by singing opera in front of an audience or networking with other former professional athletes. My typical day is anything but typical, and often comprises both my legal career and some aspect of my baseball or opera careers.

My passions outside the practice of law have only enhanced key aspects of my practice as a corporate attorney. While at first blush these interests may seem to diverge, the skill set and talents required to excel in these forums converge at several points: flexibility, teamwork, creativity and peak performance under pressure.

## **Flexibility**

I have learned to be flexible when facing a new challenge. In both opera and baseball, I need to be prepared for anything, whether it is a change in schedule, an unpredictable audience, or a curveball from a team member or opponent.

This is a critical skill in the practice of law as well. In drafting documents or negotiating deal terms, you need to be able to quickly pivot while still zealously advocating for your clients.

Flexibility is also key when incorporating ideas and opinions from people with different perspectives.

## **Teamwork**

Performing in operas and playing and coaching baseball have also honed my ability to function as an integral part of a team. It's important to understand the role you play and how that fits in with the larger team, as well as with the client. It's also important to put the needs of the job and the larger group in which you are a member at the forefront.

My hobbies have improved my capacity to see the bird's-eye view and understand how my role fits in with the larger goals of the transaction and the client. It has also been ingrained in me to show up on time and to be known as a reliable team member — which applies across the board in any job.

## **Creativity**

My work in both the opera and baseball has helped tap into my creative side.

Performing in front of an audience — both at the opera house and on the baseball field — has bolstered my confidence at every level. Feeling comfortable in your voice, communicating clearly and having a stage presence are all skills that can be used anywhere from a boardroom to a courtroom.

There is also satisfaction in bringing joy to people, whether it is a client, a colleague, an audience member or a fan of a team.

My interests have also provided a connection to my clients and a vehicle for business development with clients and potential clients. The variety of my interests presents exciting and unusual networking opportunities. This provides a unique way to connect with a spectrum of individuals. People usually remember me because of my array of talents, which is a bonus in a competitive world.

## **Peak Performance Under Pressure**

My experience playing on a professional sports team has enhanced my work as a sports lawyer. I have an instinctual feel for how to structure a sports deal from my experience as a player. I can understand the deal from every angle and from the inside out. There is a great advantage in seeing a deal not only from the perspective of a client or their adversary, but also in the context of the sports industry as a whole.

It's also helpful when an attorney can perform at the highest level in pressure-filled situations. This translates well into managing a difficult adversary on behalf of clients. Being well versed in handling failure and scrutiny in a public setting, and being able to bounce

back from those failures, is integral to a successful legal practice.

## **Conclusion**

Your outside interests and passions do not detract from your excellence in practicing law or divert focus from your legal career. The attributes that allow you to stand out in your outside passions translate directly into how you stand out as a lawyer.

My extensive commitments outside the office also enhance my skills in organization. As the adage goes, if you want to get something done, give it to a busy person. Occupying your free time with interests that feed your passions and goals will fulfill you personally, provide you with complementary skills, and bring joy and perspective into your legal practice.

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