

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Seasoned legal executive, C-Suite advisor, and strategic business partner with over 14+ years of experience in the entertainment and live events space, including successfully negotiating complex deals, protecting and enforcing copyright and trademark rights, creating and implementing content licensing frameworks, establishing legal operations oversight and providing general strategic advice. Key strengths include:

- Problem solving using global thinking and incorporating the intersectional needs of an organization to optimize outcomes
- Integrating information and diverse perspectives to approach legal matters with creativity because one size does not fit all
- Prioritizing issues and mobilizing stakeholders to execute solutions in a high volume and fast-paced environment

LEGAL EXPERIENCE

Javelina Legal, Principal Attorney & Founder | Austin, TX April 2022-present

- Solo practice focusing on live events, content licensing, copyright, trademark, brand partnerships and entertainment-related transactions
- Represent clients in live events, professional sports, music licensing, creative industries and emergent technologies

General Counsel, Head of Legal | SXSW, LLC, Austin, TX December 2014-October 2021
Senior Counsel October 2021-April 2022

- Provided strategic legal guidance on a wide range of cutting-edge issues of first impression concerning copyright, trademark, employment, privacy, immigration, risk management, insurance, corporate, and contracts
- Drafted and negotiated complex agreements using an efficiency-based partnership with business teams. Agreements ranged from marketing, sponsorship, trademark license, artist performance, streaming music, talent releases, design, vendor, NDA, promotional giveaway, SaaS, website content, and venue rentals
- Advised on emerging issues that set trends for the industry, including, code of conduct, safety guidelines, social media usage, creating new verticals and more
- Lead the business through high-stakes matters, including the City of Austin's cancellation of SXSW 2020, crisis communications language and strategies, ethical considerations, and more
- Managed largescale business sale in 2021 and the corresponding due diligence
- Created entire framework for the Legal Department as the first company General Counsel, including, developing contract intake system, playbooks, team structure, contract lifecycle and rights tracking databases, document repository and more
- Managed a lean legal team, including outside counsel, on all year-round business and events-focused transactional and litigation matters ranging from creating new events, enforcing trademark rights, engaging global sponsors, developing digital media platforms, defending against legal claims, and corporate matters
- Designed legal architecture for new and satellite events, including SXSW Online and South by South Lawn
- Collaborated with internal stakeholders on strategies for City of Austin and State of Texas relations
- Prioritized legal needs in a high-volume environment and mobilize the appropriate stakeholders and support to execute on collaborative solutions

Associate Attorney | Leavens, Strand & Glover, LLC, Chicago, IL 2010-2014

- Reviewed and drafted agreements, including copyright and trademark licenses
- Represented clients in IP litigation matters, including copyright infringement, trademark infringement, and breach of contract
- Registered copyrights, filed and prosecuted trademark applications, managed trademark docket
- Cleared copyrights and trademarks for films, television shows, and commercials

Music Licensing Agent | Old Town School of Folk Music, Chicago, IL 2010-2011

- Researched rightsholders of 120 compositions and sound recordings (partially avail: <https://soundcloud.com/oldtownschool>)
- Administered mechanical licenses and negotiated master licenses to release music for digital download

Law Clerk | Lawyers for the Creative Arts, Chicago, IL 2009-2010

Performed client intake for artists and arts related businesses, drafted legal memos, and researched rightsholders for licensing

Internships:

- Legal Intern | Circuit Court of Cook County Judge Robert Lopez-Cepero, Chicago, IL, 1/2009-8/2009
- Political Intern | United States Senator Richard Durbin, Washington, D.C., 1/2007-5/2007

EDUCATION

Loyola University Chicago School of Law | Juris Doctor, Dean's List 2010

New York University, Tisch School of the Arts | Bachelor of Fine Arts Politics, Dance (Double Major), Dean's List 2005

TEACHING & CONFERENCE PANEL PRESENTATIONS

Adjunct Professor:

- University of Texas School of Law, Law of Music Festivals & Live Events, Austin, TX, Fall 2018-19, 2021-24, 2025 forthcoming
- DePaul University College of Law, Entertainment Law, Chicago, IL, Summer 2014

Conference Panelist:

- “Copyright Issues and Artificial Intelligence.” American Intellectual Property Law Association Annual Meeting, October 24, 2024. Paper available at: bit.ly/3WGFJ6E.
- “Ask an Expert: Contracts, Insurance, Visas, Employment and Legislation in the COVID-19 Era.” Association of Performing Arts Professionals, Webinar, 3/27/2020
- “Trademark Harmony – How Can We Use Each Others Marks in this Global Marketplace.” Association of Corporate Counsel Annual Meeting, Austin, TX, 10/2018
- Lunch keynote. American Bar Association Business Law Section, Middle Market and Small Business Committee meeting, Austin, TX, 9/2018
- “Music Festival Law.” Entertainment Law Institute Annual Meeting, Austin, TX, 11/2017
- “Sports and Entertainment General Counsels.” American Bar Association Forum on Entertainment and Sports Annual Meeting, Las Vegas, NV, 10/2017
- “Developing General Counsel Skills.” Association of Corporate Counsel University Conference, New Orleans, LA, 6/2017
- “Music and Film Festivals.” Lawyers for the Creative Arts Music Law Bootcamp, Chicago, IL, 8/2016
- “The Sound of Music: Legal Issues with Music Festivals.” American Bar Association Webinar, 5/2016
- “Music Publishing and Recording Agreements.” Lawyers for the Creative Arts Music Law Bootcamp, Chicago, IL, 6/2014
- “Legal Issues for Writers.” Chicago Writer’s Conference, Chicago, IL, 10/2013
- “Music Supervisors and Music Directors: The New Rock Stars of the Music Biz?” and “Artist Development, Career Development, and Building Your Team.” Yellow Phone Music Conference, Milwaukee, WI, 9/2013

SERVICE & AWARDS

Volunteer Attorney

- Volunteer Legal Services, Central Texas (11/1/2020-present)
- American Gateways, Credible Fear Interview (7/2018-9/2018)
- Lawyers for the Creative Arts, Chicago, IL (11/2011-12/2014)

Chair Elect | Entertainment and Sports Law Section of the Austin Bar Association (2024-2025)

Council Member | Texas Entertainment and Sports Law, State Bar of Texas (11/1/2020-present)

MVP | SXSW staff selection as the 2017 “most valuable player” (4/2017)

Co-Chair | Midwest Chapter, Copyright Society of the USA (8/2014-12/2014)

Super Lawyers Rising Star | Awarded best entertainment and intellectual property lawyer under 40 by peers (2013 & 2014)

Chair | Chicago Bar Association Media and Entertainment Committee, Chicago, IL (8/2012-8/2014)

Associate Board Member | Lawyers for the Creative Arts, Chicago, IL, planned and conduct educational outreach for artists and lawyers (8/2013-12/2014)

PUBLICATIONS

Leigh F. Gill, Heather Ryan Liberman, Gregory S. Stein, Time to Face the Music: Current State and Federal Copyright Law Issues with Pre-1972 Sound Recordings (Landslide Magazine, July 2014).

Heather Ryan Liberman, Dancing in the Street – Legal Considerations when Performing Outside the Box (Chicago Artists Resource 2014).

Heather Ryan Liberman, “The Musician’s Estate” and “Tax Considerations for the Musician”, Music Law for the General Practitioner (American Bar Association, 2013).

MEMBERSHIPS & AFFILIATIONS

Member, Texas and Austin Bar Associations	2018-present
Member, ABA Forum on Entertainment and Sports Law	2011-2015; 2024-present
Member, Chicago Bar Association	2011-2014