



# Member Spotlight



## GET TO KNOW NIKKI MITCHELL

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### What drew you to the practice of special needs planning?

I went to law school wanting to practice more in the legal aid/non-profit areas. I'll admit a lot my path stemmed from knowing what I didn't want to do. But I knew I wanted to get a lot of client contact and not be in court all the time. To that end, I started interning for a medical-legal partnership early on in law school. After law school, I worked for Legal Aid. Any legal services organization lives and dies by funding. It just so happens that during the time I worked in both of these places, funding for practice areas that encompass what I now know make up elder law and special needs planning was most available. So when I moved to Missouri in 2015 I knew I wanted to stay in this practice area.

### What advice would you give someone who aspires to practice special needs law?

When I talk to current law students or people considering law school, I tell them this practice area is incredibly fulfilling, but also requires some "soft skills" that law school doesn't really teach you. So I encourage people to shadow or intern for someone in this practice area to see if it's a good fit. There are just some things you can't learn in a classroom and need to see in action to really know if it is something that will work for you.

## **What are you most passionate about?**

Well, if we are talking about work-related passions then I am probably most passionate about the general idea of being a good advocate for my clients. And I would interpret “advocate” to mean various things in this practice area. Outside of work, I am passionate about travel, good food, and family. When those three things combine, I truly could not be happier.

## **Tell us something about you that might surprise others**

I feel like I’m not that surprising! I guess if I had to pick, one of the things that gets a reaction from people when they learn it is that I had 2 children when I started law school, and then had my 3rd daughter two weeks before third year started. If you want to stand out among your peers in law school, try carrying around a breast pump all day and sometimes having an infant on your lap while studying. It’ll certainly get people talking.

## **What is your ideal way to spend a Saturday?**

Spending time with my family. We are all so busy during the week that a calm Saturday where we just sit around and catch up, maybe go for a hike, or cook a good meal is perfect. We used to be running around to soccer games, birthday parties, and a thousand other kid things so having my kids older now where we can actually be very boring on a Saturday feels like a gift.

## **What is the last book you read?**

*The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store* by James McBride. Excellent book if you are looking for your next read!