

# 7 questions and a closing argument

## Member Spotlight with Joseph Hanna



Hanna is a partner at Goldberg Segalla in Buffalo, NY. He lives in Amherst.

### *Who is your hero or heroine in the legal world?*

My hero is my mentor and friend, Chris Belter. Chris is one of the most talented lawyers that I know, but more importantly, he's an even better person. He's taught me everything I know about practicing law – from cultivating relationships with clients to providing them with the best legal representation possible. Chris has been like an older brother to me, a great mentor, and an even better friend to me from my first day at the firm. I am lucky to learn from him every day and fortunate to have him teach me how to be the best lawyer I can be.

### *Did another lawyer mentor you or advise you on your career path?*

As the first associate that Goldberg Segalla ever hired directly out of law school, I am grateful to our managing partner Rick Cohen for taking a flyer on me. Over the last 15 years, he has gone above and beyond to advocate on my behalf, support my ideas and projects, and inspire me to achieve great things.

### *What or who inspired you to become a lawyer?*

When I was six years old, my father and I would walk to the North Park Library in Buffalo and read books about U.S. Presidents. I turned to him one day and told that I wanted to be a lawyer so that I could become the President of the United States. Education was a top priority in the Hanna house – my blue-collar parents went out of their way to stress the importance of a good education to me and

my three sisters. I went through grammar school, high school, and college knowing that I was going to be a lawyer, and 30-plus years later, here I am: a partner at Goldberg Segalla and still contemplating that presidential run.

### *What advice would you give a young lawyer just starting her or his career?*

You've worked hard enough to graduate law school, pass the bar, succeed in student clerkships, and maybe even land your first job. If you feel like good luck should be coming your way right now, you're half-right. You need to keep investing in yourself, your clients, your colleagues, and the causes that matter to you – and you'll put yourself in a position where good luck can happen. Read about developing areas of the law, take advantage of networking and professional development opportunities, and learn from your partners and senior associates. If you think you're the smartest person in the room, there's nothing you can learn there. Instead, surround yourself with smarter people and strive to be the hardest working and the best prepared.

### *What is your passion outside of work and the law?*

Besides my family, my greatest passion outside of work is helping our troops and veterans through my non-profit charity, Bunkers in Baghdad. Bunkers collects and ships golf equipment to our brave men and women around the globe. We have sent more than 10 million golf balls and nearly 800,000 clubs to our troops and vets in 65 countries and all 50 states. Another

important part of the charity is our Bunkers Buddies program. We have worked with over 600 schools across the country. The students write letters, draw pictures, and collect golf equipment for us. I love the opportunity to work with children and help teach them the importance of giving back to others and trying to make the world a better place.

### *What is your favorite book, movie or television show?*

My favorite book is *Green Eggs and Ham*. And, you guessed it – I do not like them here or there. I do not like them anywhere!

### *What kind of music do you listen to or who is your favorite musician?*

After a long drive or challenging day at work, Frank Sinatra and Billy Joel help me wind down.

### *Lawyers should join the New York State Bar Association because...*

NYSBA has served as the best possible vehicle for me to advance and enhance my leadership skills throughout the last 15 years. It has given me a platform to work on diversity initiatives, professional development opportunities for young lawyers, and resources in the realm of sports and entertainment law. The opportunities for personal and professional growth are unlimited.