

SPOTLIGHT: TANYA FALLEIRO - MS. JD

A close-up portrait of Tanya Falleiro, a young woman with dark hair, smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a necklace with a small pendant.

Third-year GGU Law student Tanya Falleiro has won a prestigious Ms. JD Fellowship, which enables a one-on-one career mentorship with one of the nation's most accomplished female attorneys: Joanne Garvey of Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton, LLP, who—among myriad other accomplishments—founded California Women Lawyers.

"I'm really fortunate to be paired with Joanne Garvey," says Falleiro, who met the trail-blazing Garvey (Boalt 1961), a past president of the Bar Association of San Francisco and past chair of Continuing Education of the Bar, for the first time in early August. "I know I will continue to learn from and be inspired by her achievements."

Falleiro was one of 12 third-year students selected from over 300 applicants from law schools across the US; fellow winners represent Harvard, Yale, NYU, Columbia, Georgetown, and Berkeley Law. To promote professional development for future female attorneys, the fellowship offers financial support, invitations to ABA and Ms. JD events, and—most valuable—a mentor selected from Margaret Brent Award winners and commissioners from the ABA's Commission on Women in the Profession.

Falleiro, 25, will add Garvey to the roster of other mentors from whom she's been fortunate to benefit. Nicole Harris, PG&E's Corporate Counsel, mentored Falleiro during her 15-week apprenticeship there during the Fall of 2010.

"I had a fantastic time and I learned so much from that experience," says Falleiro. "Shortly after my first week, I was asked to represent the company in a wrongful termination hearing in Chico." Although Falleiro was initially nervous, she thought it was a great way to start her career. "I'd just taken Evidence over the summer through our Honors Lawyering Program, so it was wonderful that I had the opportunity to use my recently learned skills." She solidly defended the company, and ended up getting a very favorable win. When the arbitrator commended her skills and asked whether she was from Berkeley Law or Stanford, Falleiro informed him, "I am a law student at Golden Gate University."

At PG&E, Falleiro also had the opportunity to second-chair a labor arbitration, and work on a mediation, but mentoring proved as important as work experience. "I got exposed to a lot of great people both inside and outside the company. Nicole Harris helped me get involved with the Bar Association of San Francisco, and other networks. In addition, she taught me how to develop a network by introducing me to a variety of people with whom I

TANYA FALLEIRO'S ADVICE to aspiring women lawyers? "Never be afraid to put yourself out there. Don't let your fears of rejection and inexperience hold you back. Join professional associations and reach out to people you'd like to know. Have confidence and faith in your abilities."

maintain close contact today. I also received a lot of guidance from Tanya Willacy and ended up working with her husband, Louis Willacy, at Tagged Inc. during the summer of 2011.”

After her PG&E externship, Falleiro worked at the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Oakland for Honorable Roger Efremsky. Professor Karen Gebbia’s Bankruptcy class helped considerably: “She’s a fantastic professor, and my class on business reorganization really helped me put all the puzzle pieces together and lay the foundation for the new materials I was exposed to at the court.” Falleiro will be earning a specialization certificate in business law, but ultimately hopes to get into health care law practice in San Francisco.

This past summer Falleiro worked at Tagged Inc., a high-profile, high-tech firm in San Francisco with the young, hip atmosphere of a company whose founders are under 30. “It’s a very fun, relaxed work environment, and very different than any other legal environment that I’ve ever worked in.”

Her day-to-day activities included conducting legal compliance reviews of site features, assisting with corporate management obligations, stock management, and research, much of which touched on topics pertaining to cloud storage and privacy for which there is—as yet—no case law. She appreciates the experience “because a lot of law firms are going to have to deal with similar issues, given the popularity of social media.”

Though she enjoyed her summer at Tagged—her first summer without classes since starting GGU in Fall of 2009—Falleiro was ready to go back to school. Perhaps that’s because Falleiro doesn’t take school for granted; she is “very grateful for all of the educational and career opportunities I’ve received.” Her parents have always emphasized the value of education: “I always admire the fact that my parents found success despite difficult situations. I look up to them for being brave, honest, and hardworking. They’re a true inspiration.”

Falleiro actually began her undergraduate education at U.C. Berkeley as an environmental studies major. During her freshman year, she realized she wanted to attend law school and practice law; she majored in Legal Studies, and took political science classes, graduating in 2008.

College allowed her to explore not only possible careers, but her culture and ethnicity as well. Though of both Indian and



/// Ms. JD Fellow Tanya Falleiro with mentor Joanne Garvey of Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton LLP.

Portuguese heritage, she began to identify with the Indian part of her heritage only as she attended Cal, where the South Asian community inspired her to study Hindi and attend Holi and Diwali celebrations.

Now the first in her family to attend law school—“a great honor”—Falleiro sees herself as a trailblazer and role model to her own family members, providing guidance on SATs and college to her younger brother. She now mentors Mahira Siddiqui, a first-year student at GGU, taking her along to networking events, and meeting with her often “to ensure that she’s still hanging in there.” Inspired by attending the Ms. JD conference last spring, along with the kindness she felt from third-year students during her first year of law school, this “pay-it-forward” mentality confirms Falleiro’s excitement about implementing a mentor program in the Women’s Law Association at GGU. “Rather than using others like a ladder, and stepping on them to get higher up, I believe it is far better to hold the ladder for someone else.” She also looks forward to playing a role in the first-ever, spring 2012 Women’s Reunion (see page 5 for event detail). “I feel honored to be a part of a law school community in which the contributions and history of women in law is so valued and alive, and I am excited to meet GGU Law’s women trailblazers this spring at the Women’s Reunion.”

“I’ve always been a hard worker, but being here at GGU Law has made me work harder than ever. It’s changed me a lot—and it’s been a blessing.” ///

The application process for the third annual 2012 Ms. JD Fellowship will begin in Spring 2012. Inquiries may be directed to Fellowship@ms-jd.org