

Boston Alumni Reunion – A Conversation with Massachusetts Attorney General and Proskauer Alumna Andrea Joy Campbell

July 10, 2024

Andrea was born and raised in Boston. She started out as a summer associate at Proskauer before working as an associate in 2011 and 2012. She then moved on to a position as general counsel for Deval Patrick. In 2015, Andrea successfully ran for the Boston City Council and was the first woman to represent District Four on the Council. Three years later, she was unanimously elected as the first black President of the City Council. In January 2023, Andrea became the Attorney General of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Proskauer Chair, [Tim Mungovan](#), sat down with [Andrea Joy Campbell](#) to reflect on her time at Proskauer, the friendships she forged and the experiences that propelled her career to Attorney General.

In this fascinating conversation with Tim, Andrea discusses showing up 100% of the time, working with empathy and integrity and fostering a culture of belonging. And, of course, the impact of AI...

“Proskauer holds a very special place in my heart. It was the only law firm I ever worked at, and I was quite intentional about joining Proskauer out of UCLA Law School because of the history of the firm, always standing up for folks who were excluded.”

Andrea Joy Campbell, Attorney General, Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Tim Mungovan: Andrea, it's inspiring to see the journey you've embarked on since your days here. Could you share some of the pivotal moments or experiences that have shaped your path to becoming the Attorney General of Massachusetts - what are some of the key things you've learned along the way?

Andrea Joy Campbell: Well, I'd like to start by saying that Proskauer holds a very special place in my heart. It was the only law firm I ever worked at, and I was quite intentional about joining Proskauer out of UCLA Law School because of the history of the firm, always standing up for folks who were excluded.

Lessons. Where do I begin? I think the number one lesson I've learned is to have courage and to just go for it! I have gone through some really traumatic events in my life. Those events made me stronger, but more than that, they taught me that you only get one life.

Live life to the fullest, take risks, but live with empathy and humanity. Some of you may know that the reason I decided to go to law school was because of the incarceration of family members, including my father, my older brother and my twin brother. Sadly, my twin brother died when he was 29 while in the custody of the Department of Correction, which oversees our prisons here in Massachusetts. He was a pre-trial detainee. But he never made it to trial. He had a disease called Scleroderma and did not receive adequate health care.

When I was eight months old, my mother died in a car accident going to visit my father in prison. My father was incarcerated for the first eight years of my life, and when I was a sophomore at Princeton, he also passed away.

So, I've had a lot of loss in my life, and much of it has been connected to our prison system. When I look back, the lack of humanity and the way we treat others has always resonated with me. So, treating folks with humanity and dignity, because you never know someone's background, you never know where they've come from, has always been important to me.

And on the professional side - be excellent. Think outside the box and be creative, you don't need to pretend to know everything - but be prepared to collaborate and learn. Be professional and do your job really well - that has always been important to me. Do your work with integrity. If you say you're going to do something, then do it.

Tim Mungovan: It's remarkable how you have integrated your life and career. As the state's chief law enforcement officer, how do you effectively integrate empathy into your role while making incredibly difficult decisions every day based on others' conduct?

“Live life to the fullest, take risks, but live with empathy and humanity.”

Andrea Joy Campbell, Attorney General, Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Andrea Joy Campbell: I think engaging all stakeholders is number one. Even the folks that disagree with you. And the second thing is centering people in stories – showing up in the community to represent the interests of people that are often left out of the conversation. Placing their stories in the center is really important. I think that's what folks mean when they're talking about equity.

Stories elevate people. Using stories demonstrates empathy and compassion, but most importantly, it means that you are truly centering those people in the work you do every day.

Tim Mungovan: Reflecting on your time at Proskauer specifically, how do you feel the firm helped equip you for the variety of challenges you face today, and what advice might you have for young lawyers? What are some of the memories that you have of being a summer associate at Proskauer?

Andrea Joy Campbell: At Proskauer, I learned to advocate for myself. As a summer associate, it was important to attend networking events, to get to know people and follow up with them. People generally want to help you.

And still today, I follow up. I don't shy away.

Build relationships and go after the work you want, whether it's pro bono or billable work. Attach yourself to partners or senior associates that will invest not only in the work you do, but in your leadership development.

And be open to constructive feedback, especially when someone's willing to give you the time of day to review your work in a meaningful way, to help grow you.

I also think it's very important to be mindful of the mental health impact of your work. Prioritize your mental health and have fun along the way!

Tim Mungovan: How can we as a Firm, and as a profession, do better in terms of diversity and inclusion?

“It’s important to foster a culture of belonging. Ask yourself how you can contribute to creating a team where everyone belongs, regardless of background or demographic.”

Andrea Joy Campbell, Attorney General, Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Andrea Joy Campbell: I appreciate that question, and I'll even take it a step back. When I left Princeton, I wasn't entirely sure I wanted to go to law school. So, I took time off. I worked in New York at a maritime law firm as a paralegal for two years and ultimately decided to go to law school. Most of the folks who worked there had a Navy background. It was predominantly white men. There was one woman partner. There was no sense of belonging and that really opened my eyes.

It's important to foster a culture of belonging. Ask yourself how you can contribute to creating a team where everyone belongs, regardless of background or demographic.

I want to work at a firm that has proper practices and policies in place, especially right now, with diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives under attack in this country. This is when folks need to be leaning in and saying, “These programs are absolutely effective,” and getting out there and demonstrating how they have worked. I was delighted to see that Proskauer had these policies in place. But I also looked around and said, “Who are the partners that look like me?”

I do the same thing now when I'm going to a particular meeting. What does my team look like that I'm bringing with me? And do I have work, work to do there? What does my executive team look like, and do I have work to do there? So, I think that a level of intentionality is always something we should pay attention to.

Tim Mungovan: There are now a record seven black attorneys general in the United States. What do you think that says about society today, and what do you think we need to do as both a profession and a society to be more inclusive?

Andrea Joy Campbell: If we want to change the landscape, we have to pull more people into the political conversation. I think there is an opportunity to invest in different types of leadership. We have to make sure that elected officials represent the demographics we serve because we know the value of having diverse voices.

When young people see people that look like them and hear people that sound like them in politics, they become more engaged. What are we doing to invest in that pipeline of elected officials? What are we doing to invest in the candidacies of — I call them, the unusual suspects because we need more folks like that running for office. And so, I just encourage people to run.

Those working in the legal field – we’re going to save the day in this country. The rule of law is under threat, and we need more people running for office who are willing to stand up and speak out against what we’re seeing, not just in parts of Massachusetts, but in this country. It takes investment. So, get political!

Tim Mungovan: As my colleagues know, I am very focused on AI and how AI will impact us and society. How have you planned for the impact of AI, specifically with respect to compliance and how we’ll keep our community safe from abuses of AI?

Andrea Joy Campbell: It’s a great question. I will say, I think we’re at the forefront of not just the conversation but even the work. I think we’ve moved on from panel discussions. We’ve brought on Stephanie Lavelle. Stephanie was the former first assistant for AG Riley. Actually, the first black woman to serve as the first assistant in the AG’s office.

I wanted someone, alongside our AI working group, to look across all our divisions. She really rolled up her sleeves and explored initiatives across the country. Some folks were looking at risks in the context of child exploitation, some in the context of misinformation and elections, and some in the context of discrimination and bias, but everything was siloed and not comprehensive.

We recently released the most comprehensive advisory in the country. We made it clear that we're going to work with everyone, including the business community, because the benefits are real. We even use it for discovery, and we're thinking about how else we might use it in the office to complement the work of our lawyers and staff.

But there are risks. Some we know, others we don't know.

Another big consideration is consumer protection. How do we make sure that consumers know when they are interacting with AI? It's not necessarily explained, and we need transparency there. That should be an obligation on those creating the product.

So, I think we're looking at this in a very comprehensive way and we'll go from here in terms of specific cases, while at the same time working with the Governor and her advisory committee and pushing more innovation in this space.

Tim Mungovan: Thank you, Andrea, for sharing your invaluable insights with us today. Your journey is truly inspiring, and it's a privilege to have you here. We are so proud of you and the incredible work you are doing.

Andrea Joy Campbell: Thank you - it's been an honor!

[Related Professionals](#)

- **Timothy W. Mungovan**
Chairman of the Firm