

Member Profile



Mia Kelly

By Laura Evans

Mia Kelly has had a unique career path that spans from New York to San Diego. As senior counsel at the law firm of Tyson & Mendes, Kelly works on a variety of cases including professional liability, catastrophic injury, and medical malpractice, but the main bread and butter of the firm and her practice is insurance defense.

Kelly grew up in Diamond Bar, California and went to the University of California San Diego for her undergraduate degree in political science. Following that, Kelly said, "I wanted something different, so I moved to Syracuse for law school." Right out of law school, Kelly worked as an assistant district attorney in Queens, New York, and was there during 9/11. Kelly ultimately decided to work in the civil arena and did so in New York City, specializing in asbestos litigation and product liability.

When asked how she went from an ADA to insurance defense, Kelly responded, "Though it seems very different, it is very similar. I had the investigative skills and trial experience. I had to evaluate a case, determine what evidence was needed and who the witnesses were – it was very similar to civil practice." The primary difference was billing, which Kelly soon learned during her time in NYC.

Kelly made her way back to California when her husband, also an attorney, obtained a position in his Orange County office. During this time, Kelly had stepped away from her legal career to be a stay at home mother, raising their two children; a son and a daughter. When her daughter reached kindergarten and they had found themselves in San Diego, Kelly decided it was time to go back to work. After a small stint at a civil firm, Kelly was hired at Tyson & Mendes, the firm she adores working for today.

As senior counsel, Kelly has a lot of client contact, more leeway with her caseload, and can help younger associates in the firm.

Tyson & Mendes is also what sparked Kelly's interest in Lawyers Club. "T&M started an initiative to work with Lawyers Club about a year ago," Kelly said, "we had a meeting and T&M decided to help carry out the LC mission and vision."

About ten women, including Kelly, hit the ground running and became active members of Lawyers Club committees and sub-committees. "What I personally like is that it gives me the opportunity to connect with other women that are senior in their career – learn what they like, don't like, what they have been successful at or not in their careers," Kelly stated. In addition to networking, Kelly appreciates the great opportunities to learn a variety of skills and issues such as trial advocacy or strategy. "There is a community of strong women who are there to support each other," she said.

In her free time, Kelly loves a variety of San Diego activities, including the thriving arts community or the wonderful food scene. If she is not at one of her child's sporting events, you can find her on the slopes skiing with her family. Kelly also makes time to sit on the board of her children's school and help with T&M's volunteer program and committees.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Q: What is your motto or the words you live by that mean a lot to you?

A: I have to reference a wonderful book I just finished, *A Gentleman in Moscow*, "For what matters in life is not whether we receive a round of applause; what matters is whether we have the courage to venture forth despite the uncertainty of acclaim."

Q: Who has been the greatest influence on you?

A: My parents. I still think to this day when making a decision, whether it would make them proud.

Q: What is your current state of mind?

A: Positive thoughts and energy at all times.

Q: What do you consider your greatest achievement?

A: Raising two good humans.

Q: If you were to die and come back as a person or a thing, what would it be?

A: A bird. A bald eagle so I would be protected and have millions of adoring fans!



Laura Evans is a Deputy District Attorney in San Diego, a member of Lawyers Club Community Outreach Committee, and the member profiles coordinator for Lawyers Club News..