

An *incisivemedia* website

# THE NATIONAL LAW JOURNAL

with D.C. news from [LegalTimes](#)

[This Site](#) | [Law.com Network](#) | [Legal Web](#)


[30 Day Free Trial](#)
[National News](#)
[Washington News](#)

[NLJ Home](#) > [Columns](#) > Celebrating Lawyers in the Arts

 font size:  
[Print](#)
[Share](#)
[Email](#)
[Comment](#)
[Reprints & Permissi](#)

## ENTERTAINMENT

### Celebrating Lawyers in the Arts

 Tracey I. Batt / [Special to NLJ.com](#)

September 14, 2009

Some people are born to be attorneys. Despite the fact that I reportedly tried to get out of trouble at age four by refusing to incriminate myself further and demanding to speak with my attorney, I have never seen myself as one of those people. I always thought I would do something creative with my life. I tried not to let the fact that I had no discernible talent get in the way. I love music but, despite many years of lessons, I am a terrible musician, so I obtained a degree in radio, television, and film production, specializing in audio production. Unfortunately, my career as a recording studio engineer quickly went the way of the dodo bird. Similarly, I love visual art, but I can't draw to save my life, so I obtained a Master's Degree in art history and museum studies. That job as a museum director (or, best of both worlds, that job at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame) never materialized either.

You know you're off to a bad start when you get to Plan D (Plan A was "marry a rock star") and start applying to law schools, sighing in resignation all the way.

Then, much to my surprise, I received an offer from a large New York City law firm. Even more surprising, I accepted the offer. It was the kind of job that features in the dreams of 99.99% of the people who go to law school. It was, for all intents and purposes, the greatest job in the world, short of Guitar Polisher at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. And it turned out


 New Jersey Volunteer  
Lawyers for the Arts'  
Tracey I. Batt

 FREE DAILY NEWSLETTERS  
from NLJ with news from Legal Times

Sign u

#### MORE NEWS HEADLINES

**Lots of buzz, but does FEC have a shot?**
[More News](#)
**WHO REPRESENTS CORPORATE AMERICA**
[More In Focus](#)
**Alien Tort Claims Act cases keep coming**
[More Columns](#)
**Copyright board sued over librarian's choice**
[More Washington News](#)

Advertisement

that I was good at it, too.

However, there was still the problem of my being the least "corporate" person on the face on the planet. This was no secret. [See my previous columns, "[Make your own kind of music](#)" and "[Confessions of a high-paid fashion failure](#)."] My office was on a hallway populated with accomplished intellectual property attorneys, and it was the last office before the firm's creative services department.

I loved the people in Creative Services, and I envied them terribly. They were the ones who spent their days creating awesome trial exhibits, multimedia promotional pieces, newsletters, and a myriad of other cool things. Most importantly, they were the people who produced the haunted house at the firm's annual Halloween parties. I became an unofficial member of the Creative Services team, a sort of alien hybrid, if you will, between attorney and creative person. I doubt sincerely whether any other attorney at that firm has agreed to play vampire since my departure, thrilling in scaring the bejeepers out of attorney and support staff offspring. I even invested in custom-fitted fangs and red contact lenses. (My name is Batt. What did you expect?)

The point is that I thought I was alone, the only alien hybrid attorney/creative person. I was wrong.

Four years ago, I attended the Celebration of Lawyers in the Arts II, a Vaudeville-style evening of music, dance, skits, and emceed by, of all people, former New Jersey Governor and Judge Brendan T. Byrne. You know what? The man can tell a joke.

On September 16, 2009, New Jersey Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts, Inc., the organization of which I am Executive Director, will be the beneficiary of the [Celebration of Lawyers in the Arts IV](#) at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark. An astonishing eighty attorneys, law students, and judges will participate in the event, performing "Bye Bye Birdie" and exhibiting works of visual arts. It promises to be an exceptional evening chock full of attorneys using their talents to benefit NJVLA, and in turn the entire Arts Community in the great Garden State.

After the all-attorney performance of "Pajama Game" two years ago at the Celebration of Lawyers in the Arts III, the best I hoped for was for people to say that it was a good show "for a bunch of lawyers." Instead, everybody said it was just a plain old good show. Period.

It turns out that I am not alone in being a creative attorney. The Legal Community is teeming with creative people with real talent. I have developed a new theory to explain the phenomenon. I call it "The Ham Factor." What I should have realized long ago is that the law is itself a creative discipline, requiring its practitioners to be skilled, particularly in the arts of writing and performing. Of course the most persuasive attorneys are also great actors, singers, dancers, and comedians! What actors and litigators have in common is the love of being in front of people, of persuading an audience to believe

something different from what it believed when it entered the room. "The Ham Factor."

I plan to have a very, very good time on September 16th.

*Tracey I. Batt, Esq., is the Executive Director of New Jersey Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts, Inc., and an Adjunct Professor at Rutgers School of Law – Camden. Before joining NJVLA, she was the Associate Director and Legal Services Manager of Philadelphia Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts as well as an associate at Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP in New York, where she practiced copyright and music licensing law for seven years.*

[Subscribe to The National Law Journal](#)

#### MOST POPULAR HEADLINES

---

1. **Latest Sonnenschein layoffs cut partners too**
2. **Reality's knocking**
3. **A family fights and a lawyer falls**
4. **For Pfizer, settlement is a bitter pill**
5. **Sentences for possession of child porn may be too high, judges say**
6. **Firms carefully watching new Chevron GC**
7. **Will Skadden be hurt by Bob Bennett's departure?**
8. **Bryan Cave sued over pricy alleged error in prenuptial agreement**
9. **Archaic rules hobble attorneys**
10. **End of a law school era?**

[terms & conditions](#) | [privacy](#) | [advertise](#) | [about NLJ.com](#) | [contact us](#) | [subscribe](#)



About Incisive Media | About Law.com | Customer Supp  
Copyright 2009. Incisive Media US Properties, LLC. All rights reserv