

# PROFILE OF A PRESIDENT

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**Leslie A. Gordon**



Aside from being a lawyer, Barristers Club President Josh Ridless has another thing in common with BASF President Joan Haratani: they are both competitive triathletes. In May, Ridless competed in his second half-Ironman triathlon, which included a 1.2-mile swim, 56-mile bike race, and 13.1-mile run.

A transactional attorney who counsels small and midsize businesses such as Bruno's Restaurant and Funky Door Yoga Studios, Ridless also does pro bono work for the Booker T. Washington Community Center and Museo Italo-Americano. We caught up with the San Francisco resident to see what makes him tick and to hear about the Barristers Club.

### *What makes you happy?*

Being balanced—having enough time to get all my work done, to take time during the day to get outside and exercise, and to see my family.

### *What makes a good lawyer?*

A combination of good technical skills and specific knowledge of the law, along with people and negotiating skills. When attorneys have all three, it's a rare thing.

### *What makes a good person?*

People who at least attempt to do as much good for others as they do for themselves.

### *Who has influenced you the most?*

My father. Since he passed in 2000, I feel I'm more like him in ways I didn't see before. I inherited his values, no matter how hard I fought them as a kid. He set a high bar for moral positions and how to live life.

### *What has been the most fulfilling moment in your work?*

No one moment has been the most fulfilling—probably the last six or seven years of professional development, including leaving a firm and going out on my own. The other day, in a meeting with a client and the company's cofounder, the client said I explained things with patience and in a manner that's easy to understand. That made me feel I'm doing something right. It's sometimes difficult to gauge how I'm doing, even if I'm getting seemingly good results.

### *What's a lawyer stereotype that fits?*

That lawyers work hard.

### *What's a lawyer stereotype that doesn't fit?*

Every other one. Lawyers span the range of people, and attempting to categorize them is a disservice. It's an enormous group of people that's very diverse.

### *What's your favorite place to relax?*

The Coastal Trail in San Francisco. I like being on the edge right next to the Pacific. It's a cleansing feeling to be at the tip of a huge body of water.

### *What do you like about yourself?*

That I can make people feel comfortable when they're speaking with me. And I'm usually able to hold off making decisions until I'm in the right state of mind.

### *Who's your idol in the legal profession?*

A fictional character: Atticus Finch [of *To Kill A Mockingbird*]. He got me interested in being a lawyer.

### *What's your favorite film?*

*Shawshank Redemption*. It has a magical sense to it. I like the idea that the central character is innocent yet still has to redeem himself to gain freedom. And I like the perseverance aspect of the character.

### *What are your goals as Barristers Club president?*

To increase involvement with our existing members through events, MCLE seminars, and social gatherings and to really make our membership aware of how valuable this community is to their professional development. Whether they're looking to make a lateral move, to go out on their own, to do pro bono work, or to mentor or be mentored—these resources are all available through the bar association.

### *Every attorney should...*

...do more pro bono work than they think they can afford to.