

ALLISON EMERSON JONES

BIOGRAPHY

Personal Background

Allison was born on October 18, 1974, in Owensboro, Kentucky, to Ralph Emerson, a Vietnam veteran and factory worker, and Gaye Emerson (Wiles), a secretary at the local paper mill. Allison's parents divorced when she was a toddler. Her father moved to Indiana where he remarried, and was not otherwise physically or financially present for most of her childhood.

Allison's mother raised and provided for her singlehandedly in Hawesville, a small river town of a thousand residents located in Western Kentucky. Allison's mother worked full time in the office of the local paper mill. Although her mother graduated in the top of her high school class, her parents did not encourage her to attend college. Despite this upbringing, from a young age, Allison's mother taught her that education was the great equalizer. Her mother stressed the importance of working hard and striving for excellence in all of Allison's endeavors.

Allison is the product of a public school education, having attended Hawesville Elementary School, Hancock County Middle School, and Hancock County High School. As a student of Hancock County High School, Allison was selected to attend the Kentucky Governor's Scholars Program, a summer residential program for outstanding high school students. As part of the program, Allison spent six weeks studying political science at Murray State University, in Murray, Kentucky. Allison considers that experience a turning point in her life, sparking an intense desire to explore a career in law and government.

Allison ultimately graduated from Hancock County High School, earning the designation of Class Valedictorian and receiving the prestigious Commonwealth Diploma.

Undergraduate Education

Allison earned a full scholarship to Georgetown College, where she spent her first year of undergraduate studies, earning a 4.0 grade point average. Not feeling particularly challenged by the curriculum, Allison transferred to Transylvania University, whose alumni include two United States Vice Presidents, two United States Supreme Court Justices, 50 United States Senators, 101 Members of the United States House of Representatives, 36 Governors, and 34 United States Ambassadors. See “*A Brief History of Transylvania*,” <http://www.transy.edu/about/history.htm>.

At Transylvania University, Allison majored in history and minored in psychology. Allison dedicated her senior thesis to the desegregation of the Daviess County public school system. While Allison focused intensely on her studies, she found time to serve as a member of the *Chi Omega* social sorority, a student orientation leader, and as the co-editor of the student yearbook.

Because Allison’s decision to transfer to Transylvania University resulted in a partial scholarship, college was a financial strain on Allison and her mother. To pay for her education, Allison worked part-time in the campus public relations office during the school year. In the summers, Allison returned home to Hawesville where she worked full-time in the paper mill driving a forklift truck and cleaning warehouses.

Allison ultimately graduated with *magna cum laude* honors from Transylvania University with a Bachelors of Arts Degree in history.

Law School Education

Allison’s hard work and dedication resulted in a full scholarship to attend the University of Kentucky College of Law. Allison remembers her time at the College of Law as one of the most intellectually stimulating and joyful times of her life. She was fascinated by every aspect of the law and enjoyed debating and discussing legal and political issues with her professors and classmates.

Allison was determined to take full advantage of every educational opportunity available at the College of Law. She was selected to serve as a staff member for the *Kentucky Law Journal* and was promoted to an associate editor position during her final year. Allison competed for and ultimately earned a spot

on the College of Law's Moot Court Board, an organization reserved for the law schools finest appellate litigators. During her third year, the Moot Court Board selected Allison to represent the College of Law in New York, New York as a member of the national evidence moot court team, coached by Professors Robert Lawson and William Fortune. Additionally, Allison competed for and earned a spot on the College of Law's trial practice team, reserved for the law school's most outstanding trial lawyers.

Allison has always been one to recognize problems and develop solutions. Recognizing that first year law students could benefit from the advice and experience of second and third year students, Allison and a fellow student presented the faculty with a plan for a student-led mentor program. The project was ultimately approved, allowing Allison to implement and oversee the program during her final year. Approximately 15 years later, the College of Law is still using the student mentor program co-founded as a result of Allison's dedication.

In addition to her extracurricular activities, Allison excelled in academics as well. She earned the highest grade in several classes: Remedies, Litigation Skills, Evidence, Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure, Constitutional Law, and Legal Writing. Allison graduated with *magna cum laude* honors from the University of Kentucky College of Law in 2000. Allison graduated as the 8th highest, ranked out of 138 students. Additionally, Allison was elected to the *Order of the Coif*, an organization reserved for only those students ranked in the top 10% of their class at the time of graduation.

One week after her law school graduation, Allison moved to Palo Alto, California, to begin studying for the notoriously difficult California State Bar examination.

Legal Practice

Allison began her legal practice in the heart of the Silicon Valley at Fenwick & West LLP, a full service Palo Alto, California law firm providing services to technology and life sciences clients of national and international prominence. As an associate in the litigation section, at the tail-end of the technology explosion, Allison worked on some of the firm's largest patent, trademark, copyright, and trade secret matters, including the well-known case *A&M Records, et al. v. Napster*.

Because a majority of Allison's cases were in federal court, she listened intently when several of her colleagues described their experiences as federal judicial law clerks. Allison was surprised to learn that some of her colleagues intended to take a sabbatical during their second or third years as lawyers to serve as federal judicial law clerks. Recognizing that a federal clerkship would provide invaluable experience for her future practice, Allison sought and accepted a federal clerkship offer from the Hon. John G. Heyburn II of the United States District Court for the Western District of Kentucky.

After thirteen months practicing in the Silicon Valley, Allison decided to move back to Kentucky to marry her law school sweetheart, Lawrence L. Jones II. Because her federal clerkship was still a year away, Allison joined the business litigation and intellectual property sections of Stites & Harbison PLLC, one of the oldest law practices in the nation and among the largest law firms in region.

Allison's practice at Stites & Harbison was initially quite diverse. She worked on intellectual property, business litigation, employment, medical malpractice, real estate, products liability actions, and class action matters. Allison quickly gained a reputation as one of the best legal researchers and writers in the firm. Partners regularly asked Allison to write dispositive motions and appellate briefs for the firm's top clients.

In September 2002, Allison took a one-year sabbatical from Stites & Harbison to complete her federal clerkship. Allison fondly remembers the clerkship as the pivotal moment of her legal career. She gained a tremendous amount of knowledge about the federal judicial process, substantive federal and state law issues, and the art of writing judicial opinions.

Allison and Judge Heyburn grew close during her clerkship due to mutual respect and admiration for the other's intellectual and moral fiber. Judge Heyburn has since been her primary professional mentor. Through him, Allison learned the value and importance of judicial service. Allison left her clerkship with the recognition that public judicial service is the highest calling for a lawyer, and that it was a career path that she hoped to pursue one day.

After her clerkship, Allison resumed her practice at Stites & Harbison. Ultimately, she focused her practice on class action defense and complex business and business insurance litigation. A majority of her cases concentrated primarily in life insurance, health insurance, ERISA and other insurance and financial

product issues. She served as defense counsel for clients who were accused of consumer fraud by putative statewide and nationwide classes located in Kentucky, Washington, Texas, South Carolina, and Ohio. She served as the lead associate attorney on several complex business, employment, and class action cases. Among other things, she coordinated defensive and offensive discovery, identified and coordinated with experts, conferred with in-house counsel on case strategy, and oversaw a staff of approximately twenty-five junior associates and paralegals. Allison regularly appeared in state and federal court to argue class certification, discovery, and summary judgment motions. Moreover, Allison took and defended numerous depositions and participated in settlement conferences and mediations.

Allison was viewed by her Stites & Harbison colleagues not only as a star lawyer, but also as one of the hardest working lawyers in the firm. As a testament to her strong work ethic, when she was over six months pregnant, Allison served as lead counsel in an arbitration proceeding that involved in excess of \$1 million in claims.

Despite logging thousands of billable hours, Allison was always cognizant of her duty to “give back” to the community. She donated her legal services by her involvement in several different community programs. She served a volunteer lawyer for the Louisville Center for Women and Families representing victims of domestic violence in obtaining permanent restraining orders; the Louisville Legal Aid Society representing individuals in eviction proceedings; and the Louisville Bar Association’s Call-A-Lawyer program, helping individuals with various legal issues find resources and permanent representation.

In the early 2006, Judge Heyburn summoned Allison to return to the federal court to work as a staff attorney during his term as Chief Judge of the district. During her tenure, Allison drafted legal opinions for all the Article III judges in the Western District of Kentucky, but she worked primarily for the Chief Judge of the Western District of Kentucky. While it meant a considerable pay cut, Allison was drawn to the opportunity to return to judicial service.

As a staff attorney, Allison managed and oversaw a significant caseload pending in the United States District Court for the Western District of Kentucky (primarily civil rights, employment, and *habeas corpus* actions). Allison performed statutorily mandated initial review of pleadings, recommended disposition of all motions, identified the necessity and timing of settlement conferences, prepared the judges for hearings, and drafted countless opinions and

orders. Allison developed an interest in *habeas corpus* actions¹ and the judges routinely requested her assistance with death penalty and other complicated *habeas corpus* issues.

The judges also regularly called upon Allison to handle other complex issues. Prior to the 2008 presidential election, Allison was enlisted to draft a comprehensive memorandum for all the judges on federal and state election law matters. She also played an integral role in establishing a procedure for the judges to review the sentences of prisoners eligible for a possible sentence reduction after the Crack-Cocaine Equitable Sentencing Act of 2007 became retroactive. As head of the *pro se* litigant division, Allison authored the Western District of Kentucky's first self-help manual for *pro se* litigants.

In 2010, Chief Judge Thomas B. Russell selected Allison to represent the Western District of Kentucky at the National Federal Staff Attorney Conference in Chicago, Illinois. In 2011, Allison was appointed to serve on the Subcommittee on General Orders for the Joint Local Rules Committee for the Eastern and Western Districts of Kentucky.

Judicial Career

In November 2011, Governor Steve Beshear appointed Allison to serve as an Administrative Law Judge for the Commonwealth of Kentucky for a four-year term beginning January 1, 2012. As an Administrative Law Judge, Allison oversees a docket of approximately 350 to 400 active workers' compensation claims. Allison adjudicates all pre-hearing motions, conducts settlement conferences, presides over administrative adjudicatory/evidentiary hearings, and renders final written opinions, orders, and awards. When receiving evidence, Allison is charged with ruling on its competency, relevancy and materiality. When rendering a decision, Allison issues both factual findings and conclusions of law.

To date, Allison has rendered over 100 opinions (none of which have been remanded or reversed), conducted over 300 settlement conferences, approved over 170 settlements, and presided over 180 hearings. Allison has also issued over a 1000 orders addressing various discovery and other non-dispositive motions. Allison is well-regarded and regularly receives praise from both plaintiffs' and defense counsel for her clear, well-reasoned and understandable writing style.

¹Most of the *habeas corpus* actions Allison worked on involved state prisoners challenging the constitutionality of their convictions.

Allison has also taken an active administrative roll within the Department of Workers' Claims. Commissioner Dwight T. Lovan selected Allison to serve on the Technology/Electronic Filing Exploratory Committee. The committee's primary task is the implementation of electronic filing in workers' compensation cases. The Department also selected Allison to attend the National Association of Workers' Compensation Judicial College in Orlando, Florida, where she exchanged information and ideas with administrative law judges throughout the nation.

Personal Information

On June 8, 2002, Allison married her law school sweetheart, Lawrence L. Jones II. Allison and Larry have two children, Riley and Reed. Allison and her family are members of the St. Francis in the Fields Episcopal Church in Harrods Creek, Kentucky.

In addition to traveling across the state conducting adjudicative hearings and writing judicial opinions, Allison is a dedicated mother. Allison founded and led a Girl Scout troop at her daughter's school and she has served as a parent class representative for both of her children. In an effort to teach her children about the value of community service, Allison has organized and led several school fundraisers and community service projects, such as the Susan G. Komen for the Cure School Pink-Out Day and a clothing and toy drive for Appalachian children in Kentucky.

Allison and her family enjoy traveling both internationally and domestically for vacations. In recent years, Allison and her family have traveled to Great Britain (London, Brighton, Warwick); the United Arab Emirates (Dubai); Italy (Rome, Florence, Naples, Ischia); Canada (Vancouver); and several places within the United States (Santa Fe, New Mexico, Seattle, New York (New York), New Orleans, Washington, D.C., Indianapolis, Chicago, and Watercolor (Florida).