

Alumni Q&A: Kim Kamin '89



Kim Kamin is a partner at Schiff Hardin LLP. Her legal practice involves all aspects of trust and estate planning, trust and estate administration, related dispute resolution and nonprofits. She has extensive experience advising individuals, families and closely held businesses in wealth preservation, asset protection and succession planning issues; representing fiduciaries, beneficiaries and custodians in estate administration and contested trust and estate matters; and providing counsel for the formation and operation of nonprofit entities, both private foundations and public charities. She is an adjunct professor at Northwestern University's School of Law. Prior to becoming an attorney, she was a certified mediator with the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office.

Kim served for many years as pro bono legal counsel for the Medical Research Junior Board Foundation of Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago and for the Kup's Purple Heart Foundation. She has prepared estate plans for HIV patients with the Howard Brown Legal Clinic and currently works with Lawyers for the Creative Arts to assist artists and entertainers. In addition to serving on Parker's Board of Trustees, her civic and charitable memberships include The Chicago Community Trust Professional Advisory Council, the Art Institute of Chicago Gift Planning Advisory Committee and the Northwestern Memorial Foundation Professional Council for Philanthropy.

She earned a B.A. with distinction and departmental honors from Stanford University and a J.D. from the University of Chicago Law School, serving as a judicial extern with the Honorable Marvin E. Aspen of U.S. District Court in the Northern District of Illinois. Her son Grayson is entering 5th grade at Parker this fall.

Why did you decide to become an attorney?

It's no surprise I became an attorney considering that I come from a family of attorneys. (Three of my grandparents were attorneys whose five children all became attorneys, four of whom married attorneys who were children of attorneys.) It was a given that I would go to law school, if for no other reason than to keep up at the Thanksgiving dinner table. My honors research in college was in psychology and law, and my original plan was to earn a J.D. and then a Ph.D. in psychology so I could pursue a career in academia. But my experiences as a summer associate in a law firm made me decide I wanted to be a practicing attorney working with families to solve problems and structure their affairs in real time. By teaching as an adjunct, I have been able to achieve most of my original goals of also being involved in education.

What do you enjoy most about your legal work?

The most satisfying part is assisting clients in navigating important decisions to structure their affairs to reflect their individual values. These are intimate matters, and the choices they make now can impact their families for many generations to come. Millions of dollars and the future of their families are at stake. I also enjoy assisting with the day-to-day operations of administering trusts and foundations, as well applying my skills as a mediator for dispute resolution in the trusts and estates context.

Were there people or activities during your time as a Parker student that influenced your decisions after graduating?

In many decisions, I have been inspired by the words of Dr. Marie Stone, who said, "If you want something done, ask a busy person," and "The answer is YES, now what is the question?" I have been influenced by all my experiences at Parker, which taught me to think in terms of "everything to help, and nothing to hinder" and to always strive to do my best, not by competing against other people, but only against myself. In addition, at a small school like Parker, the juggling that students must manage to participate in multiple extracurricular activities was great practice for accomplishing a lot despite the limitations of a 24-hour day. Also important, the deep friendships I formed at Parker have been fundamental in influencing my development as an adult and my decisions about where to live, whom to marry and how to raise my son.

What are some of your favorite Parker memories?

Enjoying traditions like Morning Ex, County Fair, Class Day, the Medieval Fair, Colonial Week and performing in the spring musical come to mind first in my internal highlights reel. But some of my favorite memories are the non-specific quiet times: swinging with my friends on the playground at recess in Lower School and climbing the trees that used to border the field or, in Upper School, studying in the alcove while another student played something soulful on the piano.

When did you start volunteering at Parker and in what capacity?

I felt extreme gratitude and a strong sense of responsibility to support Parker immediately upon graduating from the school. I remember being a college student, receiving my first solicitation for the Annual Fund and sending in a \$10 check. I started attending Alumni Association meetings and volunteered to serve as my class agent. Eventually I ran to be secretary of the Association, then vice-president, then a representative to the Board of Trustees and then co-president.

What are some of your goals/areas of priority as you assume the co-leadership of the Alumni Association?

During the past seven years, the Association has grown significantly, increased its number of events, re-engaged a large number of alums who had lost some of their connection to the Parker community and launched the Reunion Giving Program. My goals are to make sure we build on the success of the past several years, focus on refreshing some of our recent traditions to keep them compelling and continue educating alums about their responsibility to give back to Parker. In particular, the clock is ticking to meet the challenge of the Diane and David B Heller Scholarship Challenge, and I know this cause is one that resonates with many alums who are concerned about diversity and wish Parker to be an inclusive community. To this end, I also believe that if Parker alums would focus their energies, the school could greatly increase its endowment (my goal would be \$100 million) to hopefully expand scholarship support, relieve tuition pressure, secure the best faculty and staff and preserve Parker's future as a leading educational

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force in the country.

Anything else you'd like to add?

In my view, Parker is a place where anything is possible. It is a community that supports and inspires each of us to be the best we can be. Parker's basic value system emphasizes open-mindedness, creative problem solving, respect for others and an overriding concern for our country and our world. Parker is not perfect, but it is always evolving in its aspiration to be better. My hope is that all alums will find a way to share their time, talents and funds to help preserve the privilege and magic of a Parker education for many generations to come.