
Q&A with Allyson Cohen ('90), President of the BU Law Alumni Association

With five years of experience on the association's executive counsel, Cohen is eager to serve.



For many graduates of Boston University School of Law, the law school [Alumni Association](#) offers an ideal way to stay connected. The association, led by an executive committee, marshals resources to the use and benefit of the School, allows alumni to express concerns and interests regarding the School, provides events for graduates to reconnect, and facilitates professional relationships among alumni.

The Alumni Association elected Allyson Cohen ('90) as its FY2017 president. Cohen practices elder law, employment law, corporate law, business litigation, and trusts and estates in her own firm, [Cohen Law Services](#) . She also hosts a legal talk show on WTAG called [Legal Ease](#) , where she discusses the intricacies of health care law and generational planning. She has served on the Alumni Association's executive board for five years, and serves as secretary on the Advanced Math and Science Academy Charter School Board of Trustees.

We gave Cohen a call to discuss her time at BU Law, her career, and her position as president.

Q *Why did you decide to attend BU Law, and what stands out about your experience?*

A My dad, Gerry Cohen, graduated from BU Law in 1962. Although he never practiced with a law firm, he used the knowledge he gained through his law school education as a foundation for building several successful businesses. A huge draw for me was going to the same school as my dad so I could continue the legacy and use my law school education to create a life that is meaningful and purpose driven.

At BU Law, I focused on real estate and trust and estate law. One of my favorite memories from school was the camaraderie between the students and the faculty. Even in my larger classes, everyone was friendly with each other, we were a very cohesive group. I learned from that experience the importance of being part of as well as building a strong team. I have carried that sense of camaraderie and teamwork to my career as a lawyer and to my position as principal of my law firm.

Why did you first become involved with the Alumni Association?

In 2008, I moved back to Boston after having practiced law in Atlanta. I decided to get involved with the Alumni Association because I wanted to give back to the school and become part of the law school alumni community. I've been on the executive committee for five years now.

Back in 1992, my dad was honored as a Silver Shingle Award recipient. The award is presented in recognition of notable contributions to the legal profession, leadership within the community, unflinching service to the School of Law, and superlative contributions to society.

In further recognition of my father's dedication to the law school, my mother, Sherryl W. Cohen (GRS'60), and my uncle, Bruce Cohen, established the Gerard H. Cohen Award for Unsung Heroes. This award honors employees who work in any position at the law school. The award singles out the people who are there doing day-to-day work at the school and who wouldn't be recognized otherwise. That concept is really meaningful to me because I believe it's important to acknowledge the people who work behind the scenes to keep the law school running; they are often overlooked and definitely deserve more praise.

What are your responsibilities as president?

Part of my job as president is to encourage active involvement from all of the 36 elected members of the executive committee. I focus on mentoring the board as well as developing and fostering student-alumni relations.

In addition, I have been connecting with alumni all over the country in an attempt to promote regional networking. I believe that it's important to get people involved, whether it's with a large-scale event or a

one-on-one meet up for coffee. It's all about making meaningful connections; that's the driving force behind the committee.

We have also started reaching out to current students. Starting in January, we'll be inviting students to our board meetings so that they can see first-hand what we do.

At the end of the day, whether we're connecting with current, past, or future students, my goal is to proudly represent BU Law, and to let people know that a degree from BU Law will not only open doors, but will enable you to have a great career and meaningful life.

How has being the president of the Alumni Association helped you stay connected with BU Law?

Regardless of one's title, just being on the executive committee keeps you involved and connected with BU Law. Committees like this often struggle with a lack of commitment from its members. The Alumni Association makes a concerted effort to keep the board members engaged and devoted to the committee.

The position of president takes work, but it is also incredibly rewarding and a lot of fun. I get to reconnect with people from my past as well as meet new friends from younger and older generations. Some of my closest friendships were formed through serving on this executive board because we are all deeply committed to the common cause of serving BU Law.

Why do you think it's important to stay connected with the School?

It's good to have a sense of continuity in your life. Being grateful for your past and hopeful that your future allows you to understand your current position in life. BU Law grads walk away with a valuable education, regardless of how they use it. You can be a stay at home mom, or a world leader, but no matter what you achieve in your life, you're taking that education with you. It's important to acknowledge that you are where you are because you entered through those doors. BU Law has some of the best professors in any law school and those educators have taught me lessons that I have used throughout my life and career. That's why my BU Law degree is special to me—because it has helped me achieve so much in my life. I'm a better mom, a better community leader, and a better attorney because of it. I believe it's important to give back to the school that provided me with the education that afforded me those opportunities and experiences.

What do you hope to learn from this role?

Any time you hold a position like this, it's about service. I believe that you gain the most from serving other people; that's how you become the best person you can be. I hope to learn how to continue down the path of serving others, whether it's students, clients, the audience of my show, or my school.

[>> Learn more about ways to stay connected to BU Law!](#)

Reported by Johanna Gruber (CAS'16).

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