



# BEYOND *the* LAW

## Diane Dusini

Interview and photos by  
Daniel J. Murphy

A wise observer once remarked that "a good laugh and a long run are the two best cures for anything." If true, Diane Dusini has a clean bill of health. Although Dusini's family law practice can be contentious at times, she radiates an unmistakable enthusiasm for what she does. Her avid interest in running, consistently pursued day after day, has helped her maintain balance in her life and has created opportunities to connect with other people in meaningful ways. Dusini, who practices law at Mittel Asen, LLC, in Portland, sat down with the Maine Bar Journal to discuss her interests.

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**Please tell us about your interest in running.**

I got my start in running many years ago because I had family members who ran. I started out with running as a stress release and because I love to be outside. Running is a great way to get outside, breathe some real air, hear birds, and reconnect with nature. I am not a fast runner, but running is a passion that I have incorporated into my life. When I was younger, my career objectives were either go to law school or to be a park ranger. The park ranger idea was just about my love of being outside. I have never been and will never be a treadmill runner.

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**Do you have any particular places where you like to run?**

I started running in law school. During that period, I lived in downtown Portland. I would run in-town. I now live in Scarborough and I am more likely to be seen out in the areas of Route 77 and Black Point,





but I'll run anywhere. It's the best way to explore a new city or new place you are visiting because it slows down the way you see the world. At least at my pace!

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**What is it that you love about running?**

All you need is a pair of shoes! That's what I love about running. It doesn't require that I actually make it to the gym on time. It can be social, such as a distance run at a conversational pace. It is like a two-for-one, running and catching up with a friend. I have friends now where our tradition is every Sunday we get together and we do our "long run." Depending on who's there, we will adjust the distances and speeds. We also alternate who cooks breakfast afterwards. It is a great way to incorporate exercise into your social life. You have good long conversations on a really long run that you just don't have time for otherwise.

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**How often do you run each week?**

These days, I have transitioned into doing triathlons. Usually, I only run three days per week. I also try to fit in three bike rides, two swims and a strength-training session. My other hobby is that I love to cook. Hopefully they balance each other out!

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**Have you completed any marathons?**

I have done four marathons, including one on my honeymoon! We went to Athens, Greece, for our honeymoon. It happened to be the 2500th anniversary of the original marathon, so I ran the Athens Marathon, while my husband ran the 10K race. This marathon was really enjoyable because, unlike the U.S., where more than 50% percent of marathoners are women, there was a very low percentage of female runners in Greece. I had a pink tank top on and, as I ran, I'd hear all these Greek women clapping for me. They would say "Go pink lady!! Go pink lady!!" It was great fun.

**Beyond The Law** features conversations with Maine lawyers who pursue unique interests or pastimes. Readers are invited to suggest candidates for Beyond The Law by contacting Dan Murphy at [dmurphy@bernsteinshur.com](mailto:dmurphy@bernsteinshur.com).

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**Any other memorable runs for you?**

I have a brother who lives in Vienna, Austria. He asked me if I would train remotely with him for the marathon in Vienna and then travel there to run it together. I also have done races in Chicago and in Washington. They have all been great, but Athens was the most memorable because the finish line is located in the original Olympic stadium.

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**Are there ever some days where you do not feel a strong motivation to run?**

Most mornings!

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**How do you push through in those situations?**

The usual way for me is to just put on my shoes and go outside. I tell myself that if I still feel bad, I can just turn around and come home after 10 minutes. And I never turn around to come home. Because in the first 10 minutes, you've worked out the kinks, your brain is relaxing, and life is good. If you can get out the door, you're there!

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**Tell us about your involvement in the Rock Lobster Relay race.**

Rock Lobster Relay! I was approached by a group of law students to participate. It's a 200-mile relay race from Bar Harbor to Portland. Most teams have 12 members. Each person is assigned three legs for the race and you cannot switch your legs. Our team took off at 6:30 a.m. on a Saturday morning and we reached Portland the next day around 3:00 p.m. The team ran for 33 hours, including through the night! My three legs were very enjoyable, so I cannot complain. But it is challenging because you are sleeping in the van, which is driving. Then the van drops you off and you run your leg, which is between four-to-nine miles per leg. You hope the van is at your end point when you are ready to hand off to the next runner, who hops out of the van. You just piggyback your way all the way down the line. It was a blast! We also raised some money for the Cumberland Legal Aid Clinic. I will be back in the van again this year and hope to raise more money.

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**Has there been any overlap between your legal world and your pastime of running?**

Absolutely. When I was on the Board of Governors of the Maine State Bar Association, there were several of us at the meetings that would go out and run together. Also, there are a couple of times

where I have had opposing counsel in tough cases and we will meet up and take a run. It is amazing how this can decompress the dynamic of opposing counsel and litigation. It's a healthy way to spend time with somebody on a different level that makes you more civil and cooperative. You see other lawyers in a different light when you do something outside of the law with them.

Also, a few years ago, a large group of lawyers started a running program inside of Long Creek Youth Development Center for incarcerated teenagers. I was involved with the startup of this program. We got permission to go in to start a running program. The program took incarcerated kids to run 5K races, Beach to Beacon, and the Maine half-marathon. We had all levels of runners, from good athletes all the way down to kids who were new to sports. The whole goal really was to focus on getting kids to develop what we call "Legal Leisure Time." This means finding a way to tap into a healthy community when you get out of the center. We tried to demonstrate that there are things you can do that are cheap and available in a healthy way. We also tried to give kids some mentors. When you are training and running a half marathon, there is a lot of conversation time. We did that for three years and it was a very successful program. I'm sorry that it doesn't exist anymore because it was extremely well received both within the facility and by the kids. In fact, I am still in touch with some of those kids! That's the most gratifying overlap between my legal life and running.

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**What's the best advice you have ever received?**

The best advice I have ever received was from an older lawyer to a younger lawyer. That was to learn when to sit down and shut up. To this day, I will think of it when I am in a courtroom. Judge Peter Goranites also reminded me that you don't get bonus points for repetition.



**DANIEL J. MURPHY** is a shareholder in Bernstein Shur's Business Law and Litigation Practice Groups, where his practice concentrates on business and commercial litigation matters.