

PROFILE

OF A BARRISTERS CLUB PRESIDENT

Leslie A. Gordon



Avin Sharma is not only the new president of BASF's Barristers Club but he's also vice president of the South Asian Bar Association and co-chair of the judicial appointments committee of the Asian Bar Association. A patent litigator at Vasquez, Benisek & Lindgren in Lafayette, Sharma graduated from UC Hastings College of the Law in 2004.

We asked him a few offbeat questions to get to know him better.

WHAT WAS YOUR CHILDHOOD HOME LIKE?

I was born and raised in Modesto to hardworking, blue-collar parents. My dad has been a forklift driver for thirty-five years, and my mom worked for the local utility company.

WHAT DO YOU DO FOR FUN?

I'm a bit of a news junkie so what's fun for me may sound nerdy. I read a half-dozen to a dozen news Web sites and papers covering local, national, and international events.

WHAT'S THE MOST UNIQUE THING ABOUT YOU?

When I was about eight, an author of illustrated history books spoke at a school assembly. After the presentation, I asked him if I could write him a letter. He agreed—and we still write each other to this day. My first letters were in third-grade handwriting on lined school paper. Then I used the typewriter my parents got for me. Then a computer with a dot matrix printer. But he's always used the same typewriter—one with a sticky K.

WHAT'S ON YOUR IPOD?

The last three songs I listened to were by Q-tip, the Foo Fighters, and the Roots.

WHAT'S A COMMONALITY AMONG THE MOST SUCCESSFUL LAWYERS YOU KNOW?

They're good listeners, respectful, and have good senses of humor.

WHO HAS BEEN YOUR MOST INFLUENTIAL TEACHER?

My friend Monty Agarwal, at Arnold & Porter, who is on the BASF board. There's the lawyering side and the part of being a lawyer that's not related to the courtroom or motion-writing—it's the part related to working in different firm environments, working in the community, managing commitments. I've learned about that from him over the years.

WHAT'S ON YOUR BUCKET LIST?

I'd love to run a marathon at some point. I started running in the last year or two. The challenge is exciting to me.

WHAT'S THE BEST IDEA YOU'VE EVER HAD?

The decision to move to San Francisco nine years ago because I love the city—the people, the neighborhoods. Living in this city, I have found myself.

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST PET PEEVE?

Entitlement. It drives me crazy. I also hate when my socks get wet.

WHO WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO MEET—LIVING OR DEAD?

My grandfather. He passed away when I was ten, and like most of my extended family, he lived in Australia, so I didn't get to see him much when I was growing up. Over the years, relatives have told me that I have a lot of similarities to him. People also talk about what a great man he was.

WHAT WILL THE LEGAL PROFESSION LOOK LIKE IN TEN YEARS?

I hope that in ten years we'll have a much more diverse profession, and I mean that across all aspects of diversity. We're making efforts at BASF and the Barristers Club to create a diversity pipeline, working with law students, with partners at firms. We're also working to create a diverse judiciary. The trailblazers paved the way, and now that I'm here, I have a sense of duty to continue those efforts.