PROFILE
OF A PRO BONO ADVOCATE

Leslie A. Gordon

Before becoming deputy general counsel at Hewlett-Packard Company fourteen years ago, Bruce Ives was a serial political campaigner. He campaigned for Michael Dukakis and worked on John Van de Kamp’s gubernatorial bid, where he met his wife. (“He lost, I won,” Ives quips.) Today, Ives is active in BASF’s Volunteer Legal Services Program and cochairs HP’s internal pro bono program. He lives in Menlo Park with his wife, a “stay-at-car” mom, their fifteen-year-old daughter and eleven- and nine-year-old sons. We posed a few questions to Ives.

WHAT WAS YOUR CHILDHOOD HOME LIKE?
It was a pretty typical suburban home with a mom, dad, and two kids. We did a lot together. Growing up, I lived in Cleveland, Cincinnati, Minnesota, and Boston.

AT AGE EIGHT, I WANTED TO BE...
I was going to have two jobs. I wanted to be the rabbi at our local temple, but I wanted to take the summers off to play first base for the Cincinnati Reds. I figured the congregation would understand because it was the Reds.

WHAT BLOGS OR PODCASTS DO YOU SUBSCRIBE TO?
I mostly follow the New Republic. I got hooked back in 2006 when they did a profile of an obscure African American state senator from Illinois.

WHAT’S ON YOUR BUCKET LIST?
Learning to play the guitar.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU?
Doing pro bono work. It reminds me of the reasons I went to law school.

WHO HAS BEEN YOUR MOST INFLUENTIAL TEACHER?
Willie Fletcher at Boalt, now a Ninth Circuit judge. He was a great instructor. He had a good sense of humor and cared about students’ success. He was an unofficial advisor and mentor to many students.

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO?
This summer we’re taking a road trip through Tennessee and Kentucky. We’re going to Nashville, Graceland, and Dollyland. It’ll be a biscuits, barbecue, and baseball tour.

WHAT’S THE MOST ADVENTUROUS THING YOU’VE EVER DONE?
I ran the Boston Marathon in 1982 when I was a senior in college. I am not a great athlete and I wasn’t in great shape. I survived one and I figured I’d quit while I was ahead. Also, going to work as a public defender in Los Angeles after law school was adventurous. The day after I was sworn into the bar I was in a courtroom with four cases where people’s freedom was on the line. It was a huge opportunity and I had huge accountability.

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST PET PEEVE?
Intolerance.

WHAT’S A COMMONALITY AMONG THE MOST SUCCESSFUL LAWYERS YOU KNOW?
They have great judgment, which includes legal knowledge, ethical principles, and a keen understanding of their clients’ needs.

WHO WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO MEET—LIVING OR DEAD?
Abraham Lincoln. He encountered so many setbacks in his early life and overcame them without any bitterness or anger to go on to achieve tremendous things with exceptional humility.

WHAT WILL THE LEGAL PROFESSION LOOK LIKE IN TEN YEARS?
There will be a number of different models of legal services running in parallel: solos, big firms, in-house legal departments. But there will also be different providers: outsourcing, contract attorneys, litigation support. People will mix and match service providers based on their needs.