

AN INCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

with Beck Rivera, Esq.



The mission of the State Bar of New Mexico's Equity in Justice Program is to cultivate and grow a legal profession in New Mexico that is representative of and reflective of the people of New Mexico. As part of that mission, we bring you the series "Inclusive Interviews." We call these inclusive interviews both as a play on words and as a contrast to the term "Exclusive Interview."

Because legal employers with inclusive hiring and employment practices have a bigger talent pool from which to hire and access to a larger client base, these interviews serve to amplify that growing and cultivating inclusivity in our profession is beneficial to all legal employers, be they private firms, government entities or nonprofits.

This Inclusive Interview is with Beck Rivera, Esq. Beck has been a practicing attorney for seven years. He currently serves as Deputy Chief Compliance Officer at the University of New Mexico where he oversees the implementation of compliance best practices, promotes ethical conduct and develops programs that align with UNM's goals and regulatory requirements. In addition, he is a Licensed Real Estate Associate Broker and is also pursuing his

Master of Business Administration at the University of New Mexico. Beck was also just named by Hispanic Executive magazine as a Hispanic Executive to Watch.

Q: What is your background?

A: I was born in New York and raised in Florida by working-class parents. I earned my B.S. in Criminal Justice from the University of Central Florida in 2012 and my J.D. from Cooley Law School in 2016. After graduating, it took some time to figure out my next steps. I remembered visiting northern New Mexico with my sister's family when I was younger, and something about that memory called me back. In the fall of 2017, my partner and I relocated to New Mexico and we've been here ever since.

Q: What made you want to become a lawyer?

A: I'm a lifelong learner. I enjoy questioning, analyzing and expanding how we think and the legal field encompasses all of that. I've also always felt driven to help people. Early in my career, I worked with incredible organizations like the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR-FL), the Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund (TLDEF) and the LGBTQ Task Force. Those experiences deepened my passion for civil rights and led me to UNM, where I initially assisted with civil rights cases. Today, I support university-wide compliance programs and initiatives at UNM.



Q: Who is your hero in the legal profession?

A: Hands down, Chase Strangio. He's a trans rights activist and powerhouse attorney for the ACLU. He's been a part of so many notable cases and was the first known transgender person to make oral arguments before the US Supreme Court. I'm sure his work has inspired many LGBTQ+ to pursue a legal career. Hats off to him.

Q: What has been your greatest accomplishment in your legal career or of what in your legal career are you the most proud?

A: As a solo practitioner, I had the privilege of supporting many foster youth as they navigated major life transitions. I also handled complex estate matters through Legal Aid's Volunteer Attorney Program. Seeing those cases through to resolution brought me a great sense of pride and purpose.

Q: What has been the biggest challenge you have had in your legal career?

A: Imposter syndrome. I've been fortunate to have mentors who provided constructive feedback, helped me strategize and reminded me that I am qualified to do this work. Community matters; it's been incredibly impactful to grow through the support of others.

Q: What is your favorite part of your current position?

A: No two days are the same. Higher education is a highly regulated and ever-evolving space. I get to work on everything from policy writing and risk assessments to consulting and program implementation. It keeps me on my toes and constantly learning - never a dull moment!

Q: What is your advice for new lawyers who are from diverse backgrounds?

A: Find your people. When I started practicing, I didn't know many lawyers, especially ones who looked like me. It can feel isolating. My advice: knock on doors, take people to coffee, offer to help. Taking initiative and talking openly about your goals often invites support. Don't wait to be invited - start the conversation.

Q: What three things would you take with you to a deserted island, and why?

A: A water purification system, a plant identification book and a guitar. Clean water is non-negotiable. I live a plant-based lifestyle and would want to know what's safe to eat - probably a lot of coconuts! And the guitar would keep my spirits up and creativity flowing.

Q: What is something the legal profession in New Mexico can do to be more inclusive?

A: I'd love to see more informal, activity-based networking events like paint nights or outdoor gatherings that don't center around alcohol. Mocktail options at events have become more common, which is fantastic. But offering ways to connect over shared experiences (rather than shared drinks) would go a long way toward building a more inclusive space.

Interested in being the subject of an Inclusive Interview? Contact SBNM Equity in Justice Attorney Abby Lewis at abby.lewis@sbnm.org.



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