There is a funding cycle that many new businesses go through as they grow. Founders first use their own funds, which are often quite limited. Then they rely on funding from friends and family or angel investors. Angel investors are wealthy individuals who invest in startups. If a business is growing fast at this point, it may be able to attract funding from venture capital firms or other larger investors.

M&A work can be very volatile. If a year's worth of deals are coming down the pipeline for Q4, what will that mean for work in 2022 or 2023?

As a lawyer, it's better to be on the buying side than the selling side of a deal. Buyers can demand certain information about the business as a condition of closing the deal. Sellers then have to respond to these requests, which can be very time-consuming and challenging.

Private equity and venture capital appear to be very relationship-driven. Both buyers and sellers need to know that the legal team is going to do good work - these acquisitions and sales are big events in the life cycle of the individual firms involved.

Private equity is normally industry focused (as mentioned; cannabis) and involves bringing together funds to invest in a business opportunity.

Venture capital is more focused on growth companies and consists of a structured progression of capital raises.

As an associate while closing a deal; your job is to keep track of approximately 10 key documents for closing and conduct due diligence on those documents. Due diligence is document review. For example, if the two businesses stipulate in their agreement that they can’t have xyz, due diligence involves updating and reviewing all closing documents to ensure this agreement is reflected properly.

Volume is most challenging part of the job when M&A market is thriving.

Deal process - client reaches out and says they are going to buy for example McDonald’s and then firm requests that the buyer and McDonalds provide the terms and the letter of intent. The buyer and seller then send the firm the terms and then lawyers start drafting all the documents. In a M&A, lawyers draft an asset purchase agreement and a stock purchase agreement (depending on whether they are buying the assets or all the equity). After the buyer's lawyer drafts the purchasing agreement then the two sides will negotiate the purchase agreement and little documents (bill of sale, employment agreement, lease) and all parties will work on all documents conducting due diligence through the closing date.

Process of closing a deal:

- Client reaches out and says what they want to buy
- Client sends letter stating the basics of the deal (amount, timing of closing, etc.)
- Lawyers start drafting documents (asset purchase agreement or stock purchase agreement based on type of business they are purchasing)
- Lawyer then will send the document to opposing counsel and begin negotiations
As that goes back and forth, there will be several other smaller documents circulated (such as a bill of sale, lease agreement, etc.)
- This process can take anywhere from a couple of weeks to a couple of months.
- Once an agreement has been made, money is exchanged.

- Private equity can encompass a wide range of industries. Having a deep understanding of your clients’ business can help separate you from the rest of the pack. Just because other firms are bigger doesn't necessarily mean they are situated to understand your clients’ needs better. However, it is important to recognize where your understanding and expertise begins and ends.

- Legal employment has changed similarly to other sectors. Whereas forty years ago a young lawyer may have expected to spend his entire career with a single firm, that is quite unlikely today.

- There are many key skills that lawyers in this area need. Communication is crucial – lawyers need to be able to explain complicated ideas to their clients. Lawyers need to understand their client’s business, including their finances, at least at a general level. Lawyers also need to have some project management skills to oversee the many steps in complex deals. And lawyers need to be able to manage their own time and the many demands on it.

- Recommended classes include Business Associations, Secured Transactions, Mergers & Acquisitions, Securities Regulation, and Tax, as well as experiential business planning and contract drafting courses. Accounting in particular can really separate lawyers at the beginning of their careers in private equity/venture capital.

- The decision to leave big law and go to a smaller firm is ultimately a values choice, and work-life balance might be difficult in both settings.

- It is important to use your deal experience to constantly be building your efficiency. As you get more into the industry you will continue to get busier, and organizing your time accordingly will save you and client headaches.

- Success as future lawyers will, not only depend upon legal feats, but equally upon a proper handling of inevitable life factors—i.e., finance management/planning—which may fall outside of our legal context. We must be intentional in seeking long term financial security, by calculating financial decisions, and also accounting for salient factors like student loans, debt, and salary, while striving for the long-term goal of financial security.

- The phrase “I don’t know” is normal—and it is not going anywhere. We have all put up a façade of understanding and clarity, while feeling utterly confused or lost. This is a normalcy in law school just as it is in practice. Not knowing "what," "how," or "why" is part of the learning and growing process necessary to becoming a competent lawyer.

- You don’t always have to know the answer, but you need to know the problem so that you can go find someone who knows the answer. I think we as law students think once we graduate and are working that we will always be expected to know the answer to everything but that’s not true! We will have a team of people that are able to help us and that’s very comforting.

- Do not feel nervous or embarrassed about initiating a networking relationship with anyone, not even strangers. All lawyers have lived the law school anxieties stemming from balancing the job search, classes, grades, and maintaining your own sanity. Lawyers remember those experiences and will neither blame, nor find it strange that a law student wishes to connect.
When preparing to enter the market, be mindful of what work-life balance you are seeking. Do not be afraid to think critically about what firms have to offer and how that will ultimately lead you to a lifestyle that makes you happy.

The interaction and communication in providing legal services to a client are the most important. No matter which field you are in, good service and customer experience ensures longevity and success in the future.

When working on acquisitions, whether on the buy side or sell side, there is no better feeling than hearing the excitement that comes from your client when the deal finally closes, and it makes all the days and hours of work worth it.