



Episode 91: From Lawyer to Entrepreneur to Mayor!
A Conversation with Sonoma Mayor, Rachel Hundley

Lee Burgess:

Welcome to the Law School Toolbox Podcast. Today we're mixing it up and chatting with Rachel Hundley, an attorney and mayor of the city of Sonoma. We are going to chat about being a lawyer, starting a food truck business, and running for office. There's tons of great stuff to come in this episode. Your Law School Toolbox hosts are Alison Monahan and Lee Burgess—that's me. We're here to de-mystify the law school and early legal career experience, so you'll be the best law student and lawyer you can be. We're the co-creators of the Law School Toolbox, the Bar Exam Toolbox, and the Catapult Conference. Alison also runs the Girls Guide to Law School. If you enjoy this show, please leave a review on iTunes. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to us. You can reach us via the contact form on lawschooltoolbox.com, and we'd love to hear from you. With that, let's get started.

Welcome back. Today we are talking to Rachel Hundley. Rachel has a really fascinating story that we are excited to share with you today. She is an attorney, who after living the law firm life in New York City eventually landed in the California Wine Country city of Sonoma. Not long after relocating there, she started to get involved in local politics, first getting elected to the City Council in 2014 and then unanimously being voted mayor in 2016. She also co-owns a catering truck called Drums and Crumbs, which is a great catering truck name. I love that. That makes me hungry hearing about it. Welcome, Rachel. Thanks for joining us here on the podcast.

Rachel Hundley:

Thank you so much for having me.

Lee Burgess:

Yeah. As I live in the Bay Area, I spend quite a bit of time in Sonoma County, and I will admit I learned about you though not through the mutual friends, of which I have some, but by you being [profiled in the Washington Post back in January](#). We loved it, because there was a great shot of you wearing your “nasty woman” shirt in the article. Alison and I were really taken by your journey from being a New York City lawyer to a smaller town mayor. Can you tell us just a bit more about yourself and how you ended up in Sonoma running for office?

Rachel Hundley:

Sure. It's all been an adventure for me. I hadn't really planned out any of this. Even moving to New York was a bit of an experiment. I went to law school at the University of North Carolina. In interviewing I had focused on Atlanta and DC, but on good advice from a friend I tried a New York firm and ended up getting an offer from them after I graduated, so I thought, "Why not check out New York City?" I moved up there and worked for a large law firm. I started practicing in 2008, which was an interesting time to get involved in that scene.

Lee Burgess: Yes. That was the year I also joined the big firm life. It was an interesting time.

Rachel Hundley: Yeah. Five months later everything starts melting down, but I hung around for a few years, and while the economy was melting, I was also starting to realize that that path wasn't exactly what I wanted to do. It was very exciting while I was in my late twenties. New York City was an incredible place to live, but I started pondering what else I wanted to do. I settled on the idea that I wanted to try my hand at opening a business. Deciding what kind of business it wanted to be, I eventually settled on food, because food is something that makes everybody happy.

Lee Burgess: It makes me happy. For sure.

Rachel Hundley: Especially really good food.

Lee Burgess: It's true.

Rachel Hundley: That was why when eventually I got laid off from that law firm and instead of getting another lawyer job I took up a job at a cupcake shop in the Upper East Side with the thought being that if I really wanted to hang my own shingle, and at the time I thought I was going to do a bakery, I thought I needed to see what it looks like from the inside. I spent six months making minimum wage selling cupcakes. By the end of it I was convinced that that was exactly what I wanted to do.

Lee Burgess: That's awesome.

Rachel Hundley: But I knew that New York wasn't going to be the place where I could do it. I didn't have the money to open a business in a large city. I also knew that long term I wanted somewhere that was going to be a little slower, a little quieter, and more particularly with a tighter knit community. In surveying my world of possibilities, fate led me to beautiful, perfect Sonoma, California, which is where I ended up moving.

Lee Burgess: That's awesome. If you love food, Sonoma's a good place to be.

Rachel Hundley: It is. That was part of the attraction to it, since I wanted to have a food business. I thought that people would appreciate it there. I had in the back of my mind for a while the thought that maybe one day I wanted to get involved with local government. I've always been interested in local economy. That's partly why I wanted to have a business. I love local community, and local government is something that people don't spend a lot of time thinking about and talking about, particularly the elections and stuff like that, but when it comes down to the decisions that local governments are making, these are the things that affect people's everyday lives, how long your commute is. It affects what kind of businesses you get to patronize. I knew I was going to do it when I was older,

but little did I know after I moved to Sonoma, fell in love instantly, and then the next year it ended up being an election year.

I had started going to meetings just to educate myself on what was happening. The rumors started circulating that one, maybe two, of the sitting City Council members weren't going to be seeking reelection, and even though I didn't know anything about running for office, it sounded like two empty seats was something that I probably wouldn't to see again.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. I bet that's true.

Rachel Hundley: I decided that ... In talking to people who had done it before a lot of them said that, "Oh. You run once, you lose, but you learn a lot. Then you run and maybe you'll win." I thought that this was going to be my practice round.

Lee Burgess: Your dry run.

Rachel Hundley: Even though I had lived there for one year when I decided to go for City Council, I decided to dive in.

Lee Burgess: You said in your Washington Post article that you Googled how to run for office. Did you really Google it?

Rachel Hundley: I did. I didn't know anything about campaigns or elections. I had never volunteered on a campaign. My family growing up was not very political. We never really talked about politics, so this was an entire field that the only things I knew about were, you know, what I had seen maybe on a movie or on TV. I knew that people had somebody called a campaign manager, so my new best friend, David, who worked in marketing, that seemed like a useful skill, I talked him into being my campaign manager. Of course, he knew even less than I did. Together we turned to Google to see what we were supposed to be doing.

Lee Burgess: That's pretty awesome. One of the things that Alison and I talk about that law school does teach you is it teaches us how to learn things. We're quick studies when it comes to picking up new skills. I think it's great that you just decided you had to learn how to run for office, so you just went out and figured it out.

Rachel Hundley: Absolutely. There is a lot and there's growing information out there now. I mean, thank god for the internet. There's enough resources out there that can at least point you in the right direction.

Lee Burgess: That's true. I think there are even organizations, maybe not as many in smaller towns, but in larger metropolitan areas, that are supporting especially women running for office, [EMILY's List](#) and organizations like that. Sometimes I think they do informational sessions to try and help people learn more about running for office.

Rachel Hundley: Oh yeah. Now I know, now that I've already gone through my campaign experience, I've learned there are amazing organizations in the Bay Area. There's [Emerge](#), and maybe one day I'll go through these programs to actually learn what I was supposed to do the first time around, but there is a lot of support out there, especially now that people are talking about it more. There's far more help and resources than I had any idea existed when I was going through it.

Lee Burgess: Do you think that the 2016 election has really spurred people to talk about this more, that people are starting to see local government or elections in general as more of a calling, as something that they need to consider stepping up to do?

Rachel Hundley: I'm amazed at the response that I've seen, especially in January, around the time of the Women's March. Everyone could feel this energy growing. Even in little Sonoma we had 3,000 people turn out on our plaza for the Women's March.

Lee Burgess: That's amazing.

Rachel Hundley: Yeah. It was incredible. The way people are talking about it, everyone was hoping that it wasn't just going to be a one day thing, that it was going to keep going. I think people who never thought about being a politician are now realizing that there could be a place for them, even at the local level, to help make good decisions for the future. I'm hoping that now that people can see that there's, especially at the local level, that the people that run are very normal. When people think of politicians they think of these federal cartoon characters we see on TV, but when it comes down to who's running for your City Council they're just normal people.

Lee Burgess: Right. It's your neighbor, almost literally.

Rachel Hundley: Exactly.

Lee Burgess: Other than having to learn how to actually run a campaign, what do you think was your biggest challenge when running for office?

Rachel Hundley: My biggest challenge was the fact that I was brand new to the community, so not only did I need to convince them all that I was smart enough for that task, they had no idea who I was, because they'd never even heard my name before. My biggest task was getting my name in front of as many people as possible, so they would know who this option was that was on their ballot.

Lee Burgess: How did you do that? Was it door to door? Was it going to events? How did you immerse yourself in a community, because you had to do it pretty fast?

Rachel Hundley: It was a very quick process. Usually City Council campaigns, I think they are maybe three to six months. In smaller towns, it's a little on the shorter side, but

I used the full six months. The first step that I did when I decided that this was going to be the year is that I scheduled meetings with each of the five members on the City Council, and I asked them about what they did when they were campaigning, why they wanted to run, what were the issues that they saw to be the most significant.

Then at the end of each meeting, which was always over coffee, I would ask them for lists of names of people that they thought I should talk to. Then after those meetings I followed up with all of the recommendations. These ended up being all sorts of community leaders, people who were executive directors of non-profits, people who had been involved in government in the past. And I spent a couple of months going on tons of coffee dates, like so much coffee. Sometimes it'd be like three coffee dates in a row. By having these one on one conversations with these people I got to meet them and kind of grow a relationship with them. I always asked them at the end, "Who do you think I should meet?"

After a couple months, as far as the community leaders and the super connectors, I have a pretty good handle on who they were. Then when it came to getting my name out to the rest of the public I heard that knocking on doors was something people did. I made my own little flyer on Microsoft Word and then literally started knocking on every single door, which I learned, only at the end of the whole process, that you can be a little more strategic when you're knocking on people's doors, because not everybody's a registered voter and not everyone's a likely voter. I was just on the ground every day, just knocking on doors. Half the time they'd open the door and be surprised I was standing there. Then I'd get to tell them what I was doing. Almost always they were very pleasantly surprised and excited. I only had two people slam the door in my face.

Lee Burgess: That's pretty amazing actually.

Rachel Hundley: Yeah. It was very positive.

Lee Burgess: I love your story about networking, because one of the things, kind of tying this to a lot of our listeners who are maybe beginning their legal careers, we talk a lot about informational interviewing or just going out, and meeting people, and trying to become part of the legal community. I love that you had, you know, a very specific ask for everyone that you met, that it was like, "Now that we've made this connection, who else should I talk to? Who could you introduce me to?" That specific ask I think is so important, because then they get to help you, but they know how to help you, because you're kind of asking them to do this thing. Then that's what you need. If you follow up, you're really building on each networking experience.

Rachel Hundley: It was a very effective way to start and build relationships. Even now that I'm on the inside, I've been in elect office for about two and a half years, there's still

people that I met that first round that I meet up with maybe every couple months for coffee, just to keep the relationship going. Having one on one conversations in a quiet place you can learn so much more about somebody. It's a very comfortable environment, rather than walking up to someone at a networking mixer and trying to have some sort of memorable exchange that, you know, probably neither person will remember that much about.

Lee Burgess: That's true. Some people get so intimidated, too, by those group networking settings. Being able to just do it one on one, you might not meet as many people, but the impact is going to be so much greater.

Rachel Hundley: Definitely.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. I think that's fantastic. In Sonoma, you're on the City Council. How do you become mayor once you're on the City Council of Sonoma?

Rachel Hundley: Sonoma, like a lot of small cities in California, and really around the country, we don't have an independently elected mayor. Instead, we pick our mayor from the existing City Council, and it's a vote from the council itself. In our situation, it's usually a tradition of the vice mayor ends up being the mayor the year later, but what was a little bit different about my year was that I was not the vice mayor last year. It ended up being kind of a shift of what the council majority was. We had a new City Councilwoman elected in November, who is actually also an attorney. When she was elected, there was a shift within the Council of what the majority values were. That's how it ended up being me.

Lee Burgess: Wow. That's pretty cool.

Rachel Hundley: Yeah. I mean, it's a huge honor. Sonoma's such a special city. Everything that I get to do as mayor is amazing and very unique in many ways, but just being able to represent an entire community as their mayor has been an incredible experience.

Lee Burgess: I think a lot of people probably don't even have an idea of what a smaller town mayor does. What do you do in this role? I mean, I'm sure you go to events, and you might cut some ribbons, or things like that, but what do you do as the mayor of Sonoma?

Rachel Hundley: Well, there certainly is a lot of the sort of public outreach, PR side. I get to go give tours of City Hall to sixth graders. I get to visit high school classes. I get to go speak to a lot of different groups. As far as a platform to share the message that I want to share, it's an unlimited opportunity. When anyone reaches out to the city for comments on things they always start with the mayor first, so I get to have this public podium to share the message of the future that I see for the community. Then behind the scenes I'm also the main contact point for people in the community that are having issues, developers that have a particular

project they want to bring to town, organizations that have projects that they're trying to do or are trying to build a coalition somewhere.

There's a lot of behind the scenes more networking, but also connecting pieces for each other, because since I'm a part of the city now and I've just been able to learn about all the different pieces, often people come to me with a problem, and I'm not the one that fixes it, but I know the person who can. I'm just pointing people in the right direction. Then sometimes they need a little extra support from the city, maybe a letter, maybe me to show up and advocate for funding for a homeless support program or other projects like that.

The other thing that the mayor does is that I get to lead the meetings. Our agenda setting process is so that anyone on the City Council can put things on the agenda, but the person who runs the meeting definitely gets to have a little more say so in what we talk about, how we talk about it. I enjoy, particularly when we have contentious issues, since I'm the one running the meeting, I get to help foster a productive conversation of a lot of public that have strong emotions about something, City Council members that might not agree. Being the one running the meeting you help find some coalition between the council, so that we can agree enough on something to vote in a certain direction.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. That makes sense. Do you think your legal training has helped you step into this role?

Rachel Hundley: Oh. It definitely has. I think every City Council would benefit from having an attorney on board, because the fundamental of it is that we pass laws.

Lee Burgess: Right.

Rachel Hundley: We are definitely involved in the legal world, and then so many things that the city does is related to contracts, or project agreements, or memorandums of understanding, or you deal with issues like property rights, and when you're looking at land use the legal elements are everywhere. For people who aren't attorneys they have to rely almost entirely on our city attorney to help them understand what's happening, but I feel like I have a huge advantage, because I already have a deeper understanding about how the whole system works.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Alison and I talk a lot about how the law can be a great foundation for starting a business, which you also have done, and it does sound with like local government, too. I'm sure that with being a lawyer helps you with all your businesses, because there's a lot of law that goes into starting a business, as we quickly learned.

Rachel Hundley: Certainly. Yeah. Business formation. I ended up having a bit of a trademark dispute when I registered my trademark. I had a certain company come after me to try to block it. I was able to fight that battle by myself. The other part about law school that I think is incredible is just the critical thinking skills that

are honed while you're there. When I am looking at an ordinance we're thinking about passing or a problem that we're having and trying to figure out what the answer is just the ability to pick apart a problem and examine each piece individually, it's not a skill that everybody has.

Lee Burgess: That's true. I think that is true. I think law school does teach you how to think like a lawyer, which can be effective. Some people find it frustrating, because it can be very linear, but...

Rachel Hundley: My boyfriend probably thinks it's frustrating.

Lee Burgess: I know. Right? I don't think anyone who is in a relationship with a lawyer does not find thinking like a lawyer frustrating. My parents were lawyers. I remember being the kid of a lawyer, and trying to win an argument in my house, it was a no-go situation.

Rachel Hundley: I bet.

Lee Burgess: What advice would you have for our listeners who are getting inspired by this idea of getting involved in local government? One of the things I think that's fascinating about what you did is a lot of people think they have to... I live in San Francisco. If I want to get involved in local government, I guess my thoughts is, well, you have to be in the city and where you have your roots. What I think is great is you kind of had this goal in mind, but you chose your community and then said, "This is where I'm going to invest." Then you just invested really quickly, and clearly the voters saw it and appreciated it.

Rachel Hundley: It is true. Different size cities will have different hurdles for getting in. San Francisco you'd have to start from probably a more visible place or at least have enough connections to have the fundraising, but I don't even think that's an impossible task. The beauty about smaller communities is the elections themselves have smaller budgets. Sonoma has this brilliant campaign finance reform already in place that limits how much we raise and spend. I think it makes it very accessible.

Lee Burgess: That's kind of amazing.

Rachel Hundley: Yeah. One year they had somebody come in and self-finance a campaign, and they spent so much money, but lost. Everyone was so upset afterwards that they just decided to make our own campaign financial reform. Even with budgets it comes down to, you need to be able to reach the people in your community. The magic number people told me was they need to see your name seven times, so that's why you get into things like mail, and you get people to help you make phone calls. I had 25 signs, but that was only because that was all I could afford, because the fundraising part was a little bit challenging, just because I was so new to town.

Even before thinking about the elected level, there's also so many appointed ways that people can get their foot in the door with the community or the city and either learn more about what's happening with the city, or maybe they would enjoy that level. I mean, for example, I'm doing Planning Commission interviews right now. The Planning Commission is the group of people that every single development project that wants to come into the city, it goes before this commission. I think they have even a bigger effect on the face of the city than the City Council does sometimes. We have a Culture and Fine Arts Commission. We have a Design Review and History. These are all appointed. Once you're on one of these, then your network builds that way. You get to learn more. Then maybe you want to make the jump up to elective office.

Then even outside of city things, looking at the community as a whole, Sonoma has so many amazing non-profit organizations, and they all have boards, and they all have support teams. They are as every bit as visible and significant to what's happening in our community as the City Council. So, there's different pieces that people can do if they want to be more intimately involved with the community. They could run for office. They could be appointed. They could work in a non-profit, or they could just be an educated citizen who keeps up with what's going on. If there's a particular issue coming before the City Council, it is always so wonderful when people show up at the meetings and have opinions on things, or they write me letters, or they send emails. Even being an informed citizen, which I would say that young people are definitely in the minority on this one, because most of the people I hear from are seniors. There's a lot of different ways to get more involved.

Lee Burgess: I think that's something that we don't really talk about is the breadth of the reach of local governments. Maybe that's because people are waiting longer to buy homes in a lot of communities or things like that, but I think people do forget that if you're somebody who really cares what the buildings look like in your town, then you should find out how the Planning Commission works or things like that, because there are so many ways to get involved. Even smaller towns, like I remember reading a few years back in Sonoma one of the issues that was up for discussion a lot was, you know, how many resorts get let in, because it's got a tourism industry. Right?

Rachel Hundley: Yeah.

Lee Burgess: How many resorts get let in versus balancing the hotels with what's there? What can the community support, keeping the local balance? I realize you know all this, but I was like, "Wow. These are some really complicated issues being presented to kind of a small community."

Rachel Hundley: It's true. Let's see. The things that are currently on board for discussion, of course there's cannabis, because Sonoma doesn't yet have a dispensary, homeless services, always infrastructure. Workforce housing is my biggest issue. We don't have a lot of rental housing here, which is a huge issue for young

people. Young people are finally getting sort of organized behind that one. Tonight, I have a meeting to talk about immigration, because I'm on the immigration subcommittee. It's pretty vast, the things that you get to learn about and hear about just at the city level.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. For the listeners, I think it's just important to remember that no matter where you end up in your life there is a lot of interesting stuff happening at a lot of different local levels, no matter what the size of the town, or the city, the community.

Rachel Hundley: Exactly.

Lee Burgess: You've lived all over the country. You mentioned you went to UNC for law school. Right?

Rachel Hundley: That's right.

Lee Burgess: Then you also went to ... Did you go to a school in Georgia as well?

Rachel Hundley: Yeah. University of Georgia for undergrad. Born and raised Charleston, South Carolina.

Lee Burgess: Okay. You've lived in the south. Then you move up to New York, and then you make your way all the way out to California. What have you learned by kind of becoming parts of these very different communities? Those are three very different communities and lifestyles.

Rachel Hundley: They are. I think California's the perfect sort of balance of all sides. I loved New York because of the pace and how ambitious and smart everybody was, but I also love the south because of the sense of community and just people are really nice. Out here I think it's progressive, but then you also have kind of a laid-back attitude. I've found that everywhere that I've lived ... I studied in Europe a few times. It's like the more people that you spend time around, especially extended periods of time, that are different from you, it makes it a lot easier when you come across someone who has a different perspective to be more patient and understanding.

Now, you know, I have people from all walks in the city that approach me about the things that they feel very passionately about. I don't always agree with them. Sometimes there's a lot of emotions behind it, but being able to take a step back and sort of consider that this person, the way that they look at the world is different from me, it lets me I think make more thoughtful decisions about what to do about whatever it is that they're upset about.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. I think that's really true. I think that's one of the benefits of getting to travel or getting exposed to different people with different stories. We're all so influenced by our story, and what we've seen, and where we grew up, and

where we went to school, and where we've worked. It's important to be able to listen to people who all have very different stories.

Rachel Hundley: That's true. There's always at least a few points of validity, even if it seems like something like, "Oh my gosh. I would never agree with that." Then you can kind of look down into where it's coming from. You're like, "Ah. That actually does kind of make sense."

Lee Burgess: Mm-hmm (affirmative). No. It's very true. You've lived all over, and you've had a lot of jobs. I loved the fact that you wanted to learn the food industry, so you worked in the cupcake shop in New York. I think one of the things that people really discredit is every type of job that you have in your career, I think, you learn some valuable stuff from. I learned a lot from temping after college and working in a bunch of different offices. I learned a lot about what kind of boss I didn't want to be to people. I learned a lot about how offices ran. I didn't really know how offices ran. You know, all these different experience, do you think you learned valuable things, not just about, for instance, they cupcake shop, you were saying you learned about the food industry, but just the skills you learned from these different job opportunities?

Rachel Hundley: Oh. That's definitely true. Any customer service job, particularly the food industry, you very quickly gain people skills, and customer service skills. It's also another way to just interact a lot of different kinds of people. Other random jobs I've had since moving out here, I've had other sort of legal-ish jobs, but not directly practicing. Even for a while I had picked up a job as a paralegal, because I didn't think I had time to work as an attorney, so I even worked as a paralegal for a while.

Lee Burgess: Oh. Interesting.

Rachel Hundley: One, it strengthened certain skills that I think ... I think that if anyone's moving from a large firm and wants to go out solo, you kind of miss a lot of the support skills that there's always somebody to do it for you. When you go out on your own you're suddenly having to figure out, "How does a court system work? I don't understand how I file this thing."

Lee Burgess: I do remember that first time I was in charge of filing something, and I just take this paper over to my secretary, and I'm like, "Hi. So, they want me to do this." She's like, "Just give it to me." She's like, "I'll have it ready for your signature." I was like, "Oh good. You actually know how to facilitate me practicing law. Excellent. I have no idea basically."

Rachel Hundley: It's true. I hadn't had to even calendar my own dates until I got out here and started doing smaller law. You quickly realize if you miscalculate one of your calendar dates, then you can just ruin everything.

Lee Burgess: Oh. I know. It's so true. It's so true. Yeah. I think it's amazing, the lessons that we can learn. Oh, I haven't even asked you, what kind of food is in the food truck?

Rachel Hundley: My food truck, I picked what I love and know the best, which is southern food.

Lee Burgess: Nice.

Rachel Hundley: We are authentic southern cuisine, and our specialty that we have become, we are the fried chicken food truck, and our specialty is traditional fried chicken.

Lee Burgess: Nice.

Rachel Hundley: Then we also have all the classic southern sides, like mac and cheese, and coleslaw, and cornbread. The truck is usually in San Francisco, but it comes up to Wine Country on the weekends for special events, and then we get to have desserts, and pies, and shortcake, and all the wonderful things that came out of the south.

Lee Burgess: That you got to bring with you out to California?

Rachel Hundley: Exactly.

Lee Burgess: I think the food truck industry is also something that's been growing pretty quickly and changing in almost every community where there's a big food truck movement. How did you decide to take your food passion into a food truck, instead of necessarily a brick and mortar restaurant?

Rachel Hundley: There's two parts to that. One was I ended up starting the business with my friend Arthur, who is an old friend from New York who I convinced to leave the finance world, and move across the country, and throw our lives into this business, but we didn't have the money to do a restaurant, to do a lease, build out a kitchen, or anything like that. We saw a food truck as being a more accessible entry into the food world. We still have the vision of after this year we would like to figure out how to get a second truck. We really need a second truck. Then eventually we'd like to have a brick and mortar somewhere. But then also the beauty of a truck is that it moves around, so whatever you think your market is ... We thought we were going to be more up here in Sonoma, but it turns out that a better market for us was in San Francisco. You can migrate around until you find your home, and then maybe then plant your feet.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Even San Francisco, are you part of "Off the Grid" ...

Rachel Hundley: Oh yeah.

Lee Burgess: ... which is like a community of food trucks kind of?

Rachel Hundley: Yeah. Food trucks do best when they're with their food truck friends, because that way ...

Lee Burgess: When they're part of a small community?

Rachel Hundley: Exactly, because as wonderful as fried chicken is, not everybody's going to want to have it. It's better if there's other options, so that when a group of friends comes everyone can find something they like. Yeah. San Francisco, there's Off the Grid, and then there's several food truck parks, like SoMa StrEat Food Park. You have G Lounge, which is a new covered park. You have Food Truck Stop. There's a lot of opportunities for food trucks, but there's a lot of food trucks too. It's definitely gotten very competitive there.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Well, it's great that it's going well enough that you are excited to get a second truck.

Rachel Hundley: Yes. I need to get one. Then my second truck can come a little closer to home.

Lee Burgess: That's right. Yeah. You got to keep yourself and your community into the fried chicken.

Rachel Hundley: Exactly.

Lee Burgess: Make sure that Sonoma's yearning for good fried chicken is met.

Rachel Hundley: Yes.

Lee Burgess: You and I were talking about this a bit before we started the podcast, but Alison and I have been talking a lot about how this is kind of a time when folks are really feeling a calling to take some sort of action if they're unhappy with how the world is, which could be a very broad statement. There's a lot happening in the world. I think for law students I think it's interesting, because we are starting to see the lawyers I think really stepping up. You know, we did [a podcast a while back with the lawyers who were at the airports when the first travel ban was implemented](#). It was the first time we'd read stories about lawyers being chanted about or clapped when they walked in the room. It seems like every day when I read the news I read about lawyers filing more lawsuits to try and create change or lawyers stepping into local government, like you're doing.

I think it's kind of an exciting time to be a lawyer, because I think we have a skillset to protect the people that maybe we think need protecting, protect the rights that we think we need protecting. What words of advice, as someone who decided to get involved in the community and kind of, as you said, be able to be kind of a catalyst for change in a community with a vision that you saw. What words of advice would you share with our listeners that want to step up and maybe start looking down the road of how they can get involved and maybe make some change in the world?

Rachel Hundley: Yeah. Anyone out there who's graduating from law school, already has, we have some really special skills and qualifications. I remember that day when all the attorneys went to the airports. I remember thinking that I was so proud that I was a lawyer that day.

Lee Burgess: I know.

Rachel Hundley: It just showed that there's things that only we can do legally to help people, but then, like I said earlier, even the skills we gained, the ways that we learned to think about what's going on around us, to understand the issues, I think it's important for people to use those skills also to try to make their communities better. If people are thinking that maybe they want a path into elected office and may be thinking about something higher, like state or federal, I think that the local level, it's a great introduction into this potential career. You get to see what it's like to be a public servant. The connection that you have with the people you represent, especially in a small city like mine, it's very close.

Then, you know, it could be something that ends up being their calling, and then there's always plenty of opportunities above that, which we desperately need everywhere to have good choices in all of our elections. That takes the right people stepping up and wanting to put in the time to do it, instead of just letting it be the people who always do it. Those, as we see, are not always the best choices. I think people deserve to have choices for their elected officials, and I'm sure there's at least a few people out there listening that maybe they are the person that their community deserves to have.

Lee Burgess: That's a really great point. I love the comment you made earlier too where you were saying that most of the people even you hear from as elected officials are seniors who maybe have a little bit more time, because maybe they're retired. I think even as citizens it's a good reminder for us all, myself included, is that we all have a duty to talk to our elected officials and help them govern. How do you know what we care about if we don't talk to you about it?

Rachel Hundley: That is absolutely true. The most challenging votes are the ones where I'm having to guess what my community thinks, because I haven't received enough information. I think a lot of people assume that either somebody else is already commenting on this, or somebody already is going to show up at the meeting, but that's not always the case. For young people particularly, I mean, this is the world that we're inheriting, I think your opinions are particularly valued.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, and are often times not being heard, I think, because ... I think it's hard, because a lot of people feel disillusioned by the process. A lot of people feel like that maybe some of their representatives don't represent them, but you have to make them represent you.

Rachel Hundley: It's true. It's hard to not to get, especially now, a little bit jaded and a little bit cynical about it all, but I think that coming out of this I'm excited to see what the

2018 election season is like, because I think there's going to be a lot more energy and a lot more choice, just because, whether people have just finally gotten so fed up that they're going to jump in there and do it themselves, I think that we'll finally have some real choices.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. Hopefully energy, like that was at the Women's March and things like that, can really carry over to the next election season.

Rachel Hundley: It's true, and for people out there who don't, themselves, want to go through running for office, there are plenty of people out there who do that need support. Just find somebody you believe in and they'll be so happy to have your help.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. I think that's true. Are you a career public servant? Is this your calling?

Rachel Hundley: I will say that I have really enjoyed helping the public in this way. I find the whole system fascinating. I do think that I'm up for reelection next year. It's going to be the end of my four-year term. City Council I think is probably a two-term job, just because there's such a steep learning curve during that first couple years. I think I'm going to serve my city a little longer. I guess we'll just see what happens.

Lee Burgess: Awesome. Well, we are thrilled that you joined us and shared your story. I'm excited to see where you go from here. Will you have a glass of wine with me up in Wine Country at some point soon?

Rachel Hundley: Any time.

Lee Burgess: All right. Sounds good. We'll switch it up. Maybe we can have wine instead of coffee.

Rachel Hundley: That sounds good.

Lee Burgess: All right. Excellent. Thank you so much, Rachel. We're going to list some resources for people who are interested in running for government in the show notes. If this is something you're chewing on, definitely get on some listservs and learn about organizations. Get on some mailing lists. Go to some talks, or hey, just Google how to run for office. You never, never know. Maybe we have some of the next great lawyer leaders out there listening to this episode today. With that, we are unfortunately out of time.

If you enjoyed this episode of the Law School Toolbox Podcast, please take a second to leave a review and rating [on iTunes](#). We'd really appreciate it. Be sure to subscribe, so you don't miss anything. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to reach out to myself or Alison at lee@lawschooltoolbox.com or alison@lawschooltoolbox.com, or you can always contact us via our [website contact form at lawschooltoolbox.com](#).

Thanks for listening, and we'll talk soon. Don't forget to consider running for office.

Resources:

- [Itkowitz, Colby. "She wanted to make a difference. Now this millennial is the mayor of her new town." Washington Post, Jan. 24, 2017.](#)
- [Gowland, Lelia. "She Should Run: This Nonprofit Incubator Is Launching Thousands Of Women's Political Careers," Forbes, Dec. 1, 2016.](#)
- [She Should Run](#)
- [EMILY's List](#)
- [Emerge America](#)
- [Podcast Episode 83: Lawyers in Action: The Airport Immigration Crisis](#)