



Alison Monahan: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today, we're back with ex-BigLaw recruiter Sadie Jones, to talk about using winter break to move your career forward. Your Law School Toolbox hosts are Alison Monahan, and typically, I'm with Lee Burgess. We're here to demystify the law school and early legal career experience, so that you'll be the best law student and lawyer you can be.

Together, we're the co-creators of the [Law School Toolbox](#), the [Bar Exam Toolbox](#), and the career related website [CareerDicta](#). I also run [The Girl's Guide to Law School](#). If you enjoy the show, please leave a review or rating on your favorite listening app. And if you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to us. You can always reach us via the [contact form](#) on LawSchoolToolBox.com, and we would love to hear from you. With that, let's get started.

Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today, we're here with ex-BigLaw recruiter Sadie Jones, to talk about using winter break to move your career forward. Welcome, Sadie.

Sadie Jones: Thanks for having me back.

Alison Monahan: Oh, definitely, my pleasure. Well, first up, let's congratulate everyone on surviving a semester of law school. Whoo-hoo! You have earned a break.

Sadie Jones: Yay, congratulations!

Alison Monahan: Yay, congratulations! You've earned this break and you should definitely feel free to relax and enjoy your time off. But, if you wanted to take some career related steps, we have ideas. Part of this is because winter break is a good time to have uninterrupted time to get useful things done. Let's face it, you're probably going to get bored sitting around watching Netflix. It's a festive time. It might be a good time to meet new people. You can expand your network in kind of low-key ways. Also, it's possible that you've returned to a location where you might want to end up working if you're going to school elsewhere, which is always useful. Well, let's start off with parties. How can attending holiday events, even if they're not legal related, help move your career forward?

Sadie Jones: Well, I think that there are lots of ways that it can help you, and you never know if they're law related, or who's going to be there a lot of times.

Alison Monahan: I guess I meant more not exclusively law related.

Sadie Jones: Exactly. I think you never know who you're going to meet. Maybe you're at a family function, even with your parents' friends or relative's friend, or maybe even friends you grew up with. You don't know where people are or what they



do. I think it's a great chance to get to know people and figure out whether anything might be useful in your job search.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I was speaking of that, particularly.

Sadie Jones: And also get some practice.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. What you mentioned about people's parents. Sometimes I remember being dragged off to what I thought were very boring holiday parties in my neighborhood where I grew up or whatever. But then once you started talking to people you realized, "Oh, wait. This person's father is running a business. This person's father is a lawyer. This person's mother is whatever." You're like, "Oh, wait. My friend's parents might actually know people or be able themselves to give me that first job. Maybe I should actually be nicer to them." And they know you.

Sadie Jones: Exactly.

Alison Monahan: So they'd be inclined to help.

Sadie Jones: A lot of times when I start talking to students, they'll immediately say they don't know any lawyers, they don't know anyone that can help them, they don't know anyone in this industry. And then when we start talking about who they know, it turns out that they do, or they have a friend of a friend or a family friend or something like that. So, I think a lot times you don't realize until you start getting into it, so I think it's great to sort of assume going into an event or a party or a holiday that it's a good idea to talk about, "Oh, I'm in law school. Yeah, I haven't secured my 1L or 2L job yet. This is the area I'm looking at." I think have your story straight and share it with people, and you never know.

Alison Monahan: Right. That's where you need the elevator pitch, which I'm pretty sure we have a [podcast](#) on. So, go listen to that one and get your elevator pitch for holiday parties down so when people say, "Oh, what are you doing these days?", you're not like, "Well, I..." You're like, "Well, I'm in law school in New York and I'm really interested in doing IP law. I'm still looking for that first job, but I'm really excited about what I'm doing."

Sadie Jones: Yeah, absolutely. It doesn't really matter if they can't help you, then you practiced talking about it.

Alison Monahan: Exactly.

Sadie Jones: And you set yourself up for a future meeting with somebody. I think there's no way you can go wrong by practicing this.



Alison Monahan: Yeah, I agree. I think this is all just good practice, particularly if you're not a person who's super comfortable talking about yourself or saying what it is that you want. These are just very kind of low-impact ways that you can get that practice, so that when it matters you're going to be much more confident saying, "This is what I do. This is who I am. This is what I'm looking for."

Sadie Jones: Absolutely.

Alison Monahan: You might also check local legal organizations, like the bar association. I did a little search on the San Francisco Bar Association website to see if they have any parties that you can attend. And if it's not obviously open to the public, you might even call and ask if you can come as a law student. They may or may not be willing to let you, but a lot of times, I think, if you took that initiative and said, "I'd really love to join this cocktail party for the young lawyers in the area. I'm a second-year law student. Is there any way that I could join?" – I think they may be open to that.

Sadie Jones: Absolutely.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. This is also a big time of year for things like local charity events, fundraisers, bar nights, young professional, or really even meetups. If there's certain topics you're interested in, I think this is the time of year that people are often out and about. People have a little bit more free time. They might be off work. And you can just start going to these things and, again, doing practice talking to strangers.

Sadie Jones: I agree. And I don't think it necessarily has to be 100% law related or in that exact area. I think anything with young professionals can be helpful and could potentially be in your area. You could also look at local law schools if you're going to somewhere that you don't attend law school, but local law schools might have events that are open to the public. You never know. Or they might have things listed. Sometimes law firms or other employers have events that are open to law students, like talks, things like that. If you have maybe friends who are at a law school in that city that you're going to be in, you could ask them if there's anything going on that you can tag along for. So, I think there are so many opportunities that are more direct or indirect that just give you a chance to kind of meet people and mingle and, like we said, practice.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, I feel like you just never know. It's like, "Hey, why don't I do some online dating?" if you want to practice talking to strangers. So, you have tools at your disposal if you want to get some of that social...

Sadie Jones: There's actually no shortage of options in that area.

Alison Monahan: Definitely.



- Sadie Jones: Now, there are those apps that, aside from dating, have a professional site and have a friends site.
- Alison Monahan: Right. I think [Bumble](#) has that.
- Sadie Jones: Yeah. I don't know how well it works, but I also think you have nothing to lose to try. You never know.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah, I feel the same way about meetups. When I was living abroad, I went to a number of different meetup groups because you think, "I don't know, maybe I'll meet some people that I like. I'm interested in this topic, I'd like to practice my Spanish or whatever." So, whatever it is. There's another organization that I joined abroad called InterNations, but they also let people in the US join. So, any of these. There are just lots of ways you can get involved with things and just get out there, and have a little bit of fun and also have practice being in a social setting, what are you wearing, how are you handling your drink and food and all these things that we've talked about before. But these are ways that you're not going to screw up your entire life if you spilled wine on something.
- Sadie Jones: Yeah, exactly. I think just the chance to talk to people you don't know at all. So maybe practice going by yourself without a friend and see how you do. Like you said, you don't really have much to lose here, so I think it's just an opportunity to sort of feel where you can improve.
- Alison Monahan: Right, exactly. And who knows, maybe you'll meet some interesting people and maybe one of them will end up being a useful connection. I think if you go out with that goal, it's probably not going to be super productive. But if you go out with the idea of, "Oh, I'm just going to go out, see what happens, have a fun night. Then if something productive happens, great." But you can't go in and be like, "Hey, I got to find me a job right now." People are like, "Oh, okay. We don't know you."
- Sadie Jones: Yeah, I think that never works, and that is something to sort of keep in mind. You don't want to be one of those people who is just asking for something from everyone or is looking for something. So, I think you just view it as it could be a positive, it probably won't be a negative, and hopefully you have fun.
- Alison Monahan: Right, and you do show up prepared with some type of card or some way that people can contact you, if you want to. Because that's frustrating if you make this great connection and someone is like, "Oh, you should definitely talk to my cousin. They're going to be in town this week. How do I get in touch with you?" And you're like, "Um..." I mean, whatever, you can give them your phone number; it's not the worst thing. But it's always nice to have something to hand out.



Sadie Jones: And same the other way, which we've talked about before, is if you get things from other people, make sure that you keep them, that you follow up. All the same sort of advice applies in this situation. That applies even if they're not a law firm partner who's going to hire you. But if they were someone who was in any way related to you finding a job, follow up with them.

Alison Monahan: Right, and if they hand you a card, I would recommend immediately taking a picture of it and trying to get that picture uploaded into the Cloud as soon as possible, because those are very easy to misplace.

Sadie Jones: Good idea.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. This is slightly off topic, but the Modern Love series is coming out as videos. They did one, which I happened to see the other day, and part of the storyline is it was back in the '80s or something. And somebody gave someone their address to visit them and wrote it in a book. Then he was on the train to visit and the book got stolen. Hence, every year, she thought that this guy stood her up, but he hadn't. He had just not been able to find her. I'm like, "Oh, so frustrating."

Sadie Jones: And now we have all the technology to find the person.

Alison Monahan: Right. So, now, take a picture of that card, put it in your phone. Hopefully, your phone is automatically backing up to the Cloud, so that if you do lose your bag and the phone gets stolen, you at least can contact people later.

Sadie Jones: Good idea.

Alison Monahan: Alright. On that note... A little tech tip for you. I think winter break is also a really great time to think about what you want and plan out or start your summer job hunt or your longer-term job hunt, particularly if you're a 1L, but also 2L if you don't have any leads or offers. This is a little bit of time where you can have that kind of head space and actually make some progress on thinking deeper about your career. So, what advice do you have for people around this?

Sadie Jones: Well, I think it would be slightly different if you're a 1L or a 2L. I think if you're a 1L this is probably the time where you're sort of starting. You probably already thought about it a little. And I have heard that there's a new NALP rule where firms can contact 1Ls as early as they want. But I really think that that situation is only applying with a very small group of law students who are looking for these 1L big firm jobs.

But other than that, I would imagine that most 1Ls are kind of looking now and starting. So, I would say I would come up with a list of possible employers, areas you're thinking about, government work, in-house work. I think you might want



to kind of rank things, like this would be your dream job, this would be your number one choice, this is where you're going start. Then maybe go through a list of like, this would be if that doesn't work out, and this would be you just need to find a job, and here is kind of a backup option, and that might be working for a professor. There might be different kind of stages a bit and I think now is where you're figuring that out.

I think if you're a 2L and you're at this point you don't have a summer job, you're kind of in a situation where it's more urgent. I definitely don't think all is lost. There's still time. There are lots of 2Ls without jobs. But this is where you're probably on to stage two or three, in terms of where you're looking. You need to have a summer job as a 2L, and I think that you absolutely can get one. But I think you need to be thinking about what the realistic possibilities are at this point and how you are going to really be hitting the ground running, probably over break and then definitely when you get back.

Alison Monahan: Right. I think in addition to the [NALP directory](#), which you mentioned, it's a great time to really look at any resources that your school is offering, because sometimes people get kind of overwhelmed with all this stuff they're getting from career services. They don't even know where this job is coming from. Take a few hours and take a step back and really look at, what resources is my school offering me? Do you want to set up an appointment for when you get back in January? Go ahead and get that on the calendar, so that you're actually using resources that you have available to you. We have a lot of career related podcasts. These are great episodes that you could be reviewing in your downtime.

One thing I was saying, too, is go to the library. If you're really just like, "I'm not sure what I'm doing with my life. I don't know for sure what type of law I want to practice. I don't really have a set goal. I can't come up with this list that you were just talking about, which sounds great. I'd love to know what my top one, two, three jobs are and then what my alternatives are. I'm not at that point." This is a good time... Hopefully this applies more towards 1Ls, but could be other people. Actually go to the library. Browse the career advice section for a book that speaks to you, that seems useful, and actually read it. I'm sure it has exercises – do those exercises. But I think you need that big picture step back to figure out your tactical strategies if you're not at the point of saying, "Okay, I definitely want to work this type of job."

Sadie Jones: Or it could be a situation – I think we've talked about this before – where you need to change courses, and that's probably more to the 2Ls at this point. But if things haven't worked out, you need to take a different tack.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. If you're a 1L, the world is still your oyster. If you're a 2L, you've got to be starting to get a little more concerned.



- Sadie Jones: And that's not to say that 1Ls shouldn't also hit the ground running.
- Alison Monahan: Sure.
- Sadie Jones: If I were a 1L starting after break, I would say you should want to get a job as soon as possible, too, so you don't have that worry all through the semester of trying to find it. It can be easier to focus on other things, but you're probably in a situation where you're more at the beginning of it.
- Alison Monahan: Yeah. I seem to recall that over my winter break as a 1L, I did an interview with a city art organization or something in San Francisco with their legal department. And that was going to be my backup plan if I couldn't find anything else. I ended up working at a firm in New York. But my backup plan was, "Okay, I'm going to be in San Francisco for the winter break. Why don't I see if I can get some public interest interviews and maybe secure a job there if this other thing doesn't work out?" So, yeah, I remember going out to City Hall and there was a very nice lady and talked about what she did. I don't think it ever really went anywhere, but if you have those opportunities, if you have that time, I think try to just get some interviews and maybe get some possibilities in your pipeline.
- Sadie Jones: Absolutely, because I think the thing to remember about break is that there isn't a lot of that in law school where you have time, where you don't have really set demanding academic responsibilities going on. And it is important to recharge and take time off and do all those things. But I also think you should think about the gift that this is for your other – your job search, other things that you can't necessarily devote as much time to when you're so busy with classes and exams and all those sorts of things.
- Alison Monahan: Exactly. It's really hard in that mindset to do the deeper thinking. This might be even a case where you call in a private career counselor or something, just have a couple of sessions and help you figure out, "Okay, I've done at least one semester, maybe a year and a half of law school. This is kind of how I'm thinking about it, this is where I'm thinking I want, and how do I get to that point of finding it? These are the resources I have available, this is what NALP is showing me, this is what my school offers." You've got to get organized, so using Trello or something like that, which we've talked about a lot, so you can really track how you're doing. Because once mid-January hits and you're back in classes, this is all going to get a lot harder.
- Sadie Jones: Absolutely. I think if you kind of set it up over break, to me, that's a really good jumping-off point, because there'll be less work to do in terms of that. You have your game plan; you'll just have to implement it. I think sometimes the game plan part is harder for law students than the doing part, if you're like, "Okay, I know what I need to do."



Alison Monahan: Right, exactly. And hopefully you can put some balls in motion, maybe send out some applications, that kind of thing. And also really work on everything you need for this job hunt. So, why don't you talk a little bit about that? What do people need to be thinking about?

Sadie Jones: I mean, I would hope that you'd already have some of these materials. But if you don't, you absolutely, by the end of winter break, should have a resume, a cover letter, a writing sample. You should also be thinking about references, which I know can be challenging for people about how to approach professors and other people in your life that can be references. But I would say that you should have all of those ready to go. So, whatever you need to do to get it to the point where you always have it available and always are able to send these out to people, or print them out and take them with you to these events, or if there's something that's specifically job related, I feel like you should be in perfect condition going into it.

Alison Monahan: Right. You also want to make sure that your resume includes your law school experience, whatever you've done up to this point. Were you in a club? Did you do a pro bono project? Whatever it is, you want to make sure that's on your resume. If nothing else, you need your law school name and the date of graduation and that kind of thing, because a lot of people may not have updated this. If you need to send it out, you don't want to be wasting hours or days trying to make sure that everything is perfect.

Sadie Jones: Yeah, and I will say from the employer side, it's a little bit annoying when people keep sending updates to their resume, especially along things where it's kind of obvious that they just didn't do it. It's not like it just came in. I get it if you got the highest grade, you got an award that you have to add it because you just got it in – that's fine. And I would try to keep up with those things as you're going. But I think that winter break is a really good point to stop and say, "What can I add?" Or the other thing that we talked about was with your strategy. So you may want to change some of these materials if you're changing your strategy in terms of where you're applying.

Alison Monahan: Right, exactly. Have multiple copies ready to go, multiple versions of things. If you're now thinking maybe you're going to start applying for this other type of job – well, you probably need to revise your resume. You probably need to revise your cover letter. Maybe even use a different writing sample. You want to think about the story that you're telling throughout.

The other thing winter break can be good for is, you've got to get clothes to wear. Hopefully you have some interviews that you're going to have scheduled. Think about, "Do I really have what I need in my closet?" If somebody emails you on Monday and they're like, "Hey, we'd like to meet with you tomorrow", do you have something you could put on and walk out the door and go to that



interview? If not, this can be a really good time to actually hit some post-holiday sales. I was just reading an article this morning about how retail is kind of in the gutter in the US. They're expecting really strong post-holiday discounts. Good for you, not good for the stores. But this can be a great opportunity to pick up some higher quality clothing at a highly discounted price, so why not? Hit them all.

Sadie Jones: Also, people might be asking you what you want for presents.

Alison Monahan: True.

Sadie Jones: So it's a chance to say, "Hey, I really need..." whatever it is. "I need a new suit." "I need a new pair of dress flats." A tie, whatever it is. So, think about that ahead of time. Or if there's anything else, expenses-wise, that could help you with this, that somebody might be willing to give to you as a present, I think that's a good idea.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. Even gift cards to a store that you know you're going to be able to find something at – that's probably better than just getting something that you don't even want from, like, Aunt Sally who really loves you and wants to send you something nice, but you're like, "Great. Another set of Harry Potter books. She still thinks I'm 12."

Sadie Jones: Oh, you know what? This could also be a good time to get a haircut.

Alison Monahan: True.

Sadie Jones: Do some of those things that you've been putting off. I know some people go back to where their parents live for the holidays, and that's where the person that cuts their hair is. So, think about those kinds of things that you can also get done to make sure that you're interview-ready.

Alison Monahan: On that point, too, not exactly career related, but any sort of eye doctor, dentist, doctor's appointments you've been putting off – great time, because if you're dead, you can't get a job, I guess, is how that relates.

Sadie Jones: That works.

Alison Monahan: Sure, why not?

Sadie Jones: Go to the dentist so you don't have bad breath for an interview.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly, your teeth are all shiny. You're not going to have time to do a lot of this stuff when you're back in school, so really think about, "Okay, I can go and get this taken care of and not have to worry about it later."



This is also a good time, particularly as a 2L, when you can work on your note, if you want to submit a note to a law journal. This is not, again, immediately career related, but having a published note is actually really great for your resume. And when do you have this much uninterrupted time again in law school? You're not going to, really. Even in the summer, you have jobs to do and stuff. So, I think if you can carve out like a week or two to really make some progress on a note... For those of you who don't know, a law school note is typically like a 30-to-40-page article about something. Your school is probably going to make you do either this or another long paper, so it's not like you're wasting time. But you get to write about whatever you want. It's a pretty difficult task that's going to require some real thought.

The other thing is if you're interested in actually getting published – so, that would mean that your note was published in a law journal, either at your school or a different school – sometimes people forget that you could be published elsewhere. So, you might just think, "Oh, my journal is not going to publish it. There's nothing to be done with it." But this is a good time to really research outside journals that you might be interested in, that might be on the specific topic that your note is about, and figure out how to submit to them, what is the deadline, what are they looking for. Again, make a Trello board or something like that so that if this is something you're interested in, then you make sure that you're getting the most possible bang for your buck out of this huge investment of time that you're going to have to spend writing your note.

And similarly, if there are research topics you think you might be interested in writing, even if it's not a note, if it's for a different class, if you already know what classes you're taking – it might just be a good time to kind of bounce some ideas around, do a little bit of research on the Internet, what are some hot topics that people are talking about, so that you have these ideas ready to go when classes start again. Alright. Well, we're almost out of time here, but any final thoughts?

Sadie Jones:

I think I would just think about this going into break, so that you have a way to sort of plan it out a little bit. Because I know that feeling where you're sort of thinking, "Oh, I have all of this time to be on break. I can get everything done. I can do everything." And then somehow, you watched every single thing on Netflix and break's over, and that's all you did. I think it's just so easy to go down that rabbit hole. So, what I would say is maybe plan it out so that you have given yourself these two uninterrupted days at the beginning to just goof off, do whatever, sleep late. And then you say to yourself, "I'm going to schedule in time every day where I'm doing some of these things that we're talking about or things to prepare." I guarantee it's going to pay off way more when you go back to school than all of the TV you could've watched during that time.



Alison Monahan: Yeah, I think that's a great point. I think sometimes people think, "Oh, I've got all this time, I have to do all this stuff", but it's also really important not to burn yourself out. You need rest, you need to refresh your brain. But that's also something you don't want to, as you said, spill over to the entire two- or-three-week period. And then you get to the end of it and you feel like, "Oh, gosh. I didn't really get anything done. I kind of feel gross. I just sat on the couch all day and ate snacks and watched a lot of Netflix. Yeah, I did see that episode of Modern Love and I remember the book, but maybe this wasn't really the best use of my time."

And also, I think seeing your friends and family and people that you need to reconnect to is also really important. And maybe getting some exercise. I remember going skiing over the winter break and that was really great. But I think being deliberate about how you're spending your time and making those choices about, "Okay, I'm going to give myself a few days of just absolutely nothing and I'm totally fine with that. I'm not going to stress out about that or feel bad about it. But then maybe I'm going to be a little more productive." It's just, as you said, really going to set yourself up for a much, much better second semester in terms of your career, because there's really nothing worse than, like, April comes around and you've kind of dragged your feet and you're realizing you don't have a summer job. Then that is not a great scenario, so do not be that person.

Sadie Jones: Yeah, it's going to feel a lot worse than whatever you sacrificed during that time because it's going to be the two-fold of, you don't have a job and you're probably kicking yourself about that.

Alison Monahan: Right, you're feeling bad about it.

Sadie Jones: Thinking about all the stuff you didn't do, yeah.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, and I think some of this, like the bigger-picture thinking or even some research, you can do this in a coffee shop for a couple of hours, that kind of thing. It doesn't have to be this miserable experience. Go get yourself, if you like, spice latte or whatever. Get yourself whatever, the peppermint. Is that what we do for Christmas? The peppermint latte?

Sadie Jones: Yeah, pumpkin spice.

Alison Monahan: Pumpkin spice is more like right now when we're recording. Yeah, pumpkin spice will be over. Get yourself a peppermint latte, a little cookie, sit down, think about what you want your career to look like, maybe do some diagrams, whatever. It doesn't have to be this miserable thing. But I do think doing something is really going to help you out, and just let you return really refreshed



and ready to jump in and actually be excited about finding a job that you're enthusiastic about doing.

Sadie Jones: I think so, too. I think just having some kind of plan going into it just feels good because, like I said, then you just have to implement it and somehow that feels easier.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. I mean, most law students are kind of control freaks, so you're going to feel more in control if you spend a little bit of time doing this and that's going to make you happier, so go for it. Well, unfortunately, with that, we're out of time. Sadie, thanks so much for joining us.

Sadie Jones: Thanks for having me.

Alison Monahan: My pleasure. For more career help and the opportunity to work one-on-one with us, including over the winter break, check out [CareerDicta.com](https://www.careerdicta.com). If you enjoyed this episode of the Law School Toolbox podcast, please take a second to leave a review or rating on your favorite listening app. We'd really appreciate it. And 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 Lee or Alison at [lee@lawschooltoolbox.com](mailto:lee@lawschooltoolbox.com) or [alison@lawschooltoolbox.com](mailto:alison@lawschooltoolbox.com). Or you can always contact us via our website [contact form](https://www.lawschooltoolbox.com/contact) at LawSchoolToolbox.com. Thanks for listening, and we'll talk soon!

### **RESOURCES:**

[CareerDicta](#)

[Podcast Episode 76: Making the Most of Your Law School Winter Break](#)

[Podcast Episode 162: Professional Development Strategies for Young Lawyers \(w/Sadie Jones\)](#)

[Podcast Episode 165: What Is an Elevator Pitch and Do You Need One?](#)

[Podcast Episode 197: Career Advice from Lawyer & Author Rachel Gezerseh](#)

[NALP Directory of Legal Employers](#)

[Bumble](#)