Alison Monahan: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today, we're excited to have ex-BigLaw recruiter Sadie Jones here with us to talk about resources you can use in your career planning and your job search. Your Law School Toolbox host today is 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 excited to have ex-BigLaw recruiter Sadie Jones here with us to talk about some resources that you can use in your career planning and your job search. Welcome, Sadie.

Sadie Jones: Thanks for having me back.

Alison Monahan: My pleasure. Well, before we dive into all the details, what is your number one place that law students should be considering for career resources?

Sadie Jones: Well, my number one piece of advice is, go to career services, get to know them, see what they can offer, be proactive about it. That's a free resource. Or I don't know if it's free, it's part of your tuition. You're paying a lot of money for it.

Alison Monahan: You've already paid for it. You may as well use it.

Sadie Jones: Yeah. Their job is to make sure you get a job, so it does reflect on them that all their students hopefully get jobs. And I hear lots of complaints from students that they don't like their career services, or they complain they don't like what they're telling them to do, that they don't get along with them or they don't think they're helpful. I think regardless of your preconceived ideas and what other people are telling you, you should at least be trying to go there and use them the best way that you can. And I would do it earlier rather than later, so that they know who you are and you get on their good side.

Alison Monahan: I definitely agree, I think it's worth trying to build that relationship. And even if you don't find someone that you totally click with, that's your new BFF, you can at least go in and say, "Look, I'm trying to find employers in this type of role, in this location. Do you have a database that I can access?" And the answer to that question is almost certainly going to be "Yes."

Sadie Jones: And they're probably the first point of contact for employers who are looking for students. So, even if you don't like their career advice, or even what they've

done with your documents, they may know of something. So, I think there're always opportunities to find things through them, and I agree there's always a database, but they may just hear about things off-hand. I just think they're good in terms of being a point of contact for employers to get in touch with students.

Alison Monahan: I agree. The one thing I think is important to understand is that career services cannot magically produce you a job, unfortunately. You need to do the legwork and know what you're looking for. You're going to have to do a lot of this work. I think sometimes students have this misperception, they're like, "Oh, I'll just pop by career services one day and they'll be like, 'Here are four jobs that you can have right now. Would you like one of them?'" That's just not how this works.

Sadie Jones: And I think you're going to get more out of it and develop a better relationship if you go in there seeming confident and seeming like you've done some of the legwork and you've thought about it, you're thoughtful, you have some idea of what you want to do. Or if you're really not sure, you have good questions that you want to ask them. But I think that they see so many students that you want to stand out in a way that you're someone that they want to help.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, definitely. And oftentimes they'll have kind of open hours, you can just drop by. It doesn't have to be this thing where you make a formal appointment. Your school might ask for that for certain things, but oftentimes, if you're happening to be passing by, you can just stop in, wave, "Hey guys, saying hi", that kind of thing. Top of mind is always a good thing to be, I feel like, here.

Sadie Jones: I agree, I don't think it needs to be a big deal. It can just be, like you said, a drop-in. And also, don't listen to what everyone else is saying. I think there's this thing where, "Oh, I've heard from other students that they're not good or they're not going to help me." Have your own experience, go in with an open mind, there're usually different people that work in career services. So, that would be my advice, is make the most of it for you and block out the noise.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. And if you don't have a great experience with one person, try to get an appointment with somebody else. Maybe they'll help you.

Sadie Jones: Exactly.

Alison Monahan: Well, let's talk a little bit more about people who are not sure exactly what they want, or really how to get it. So let's start with if I'm just not sure what I want. I went to law school because I thought it'll open all these doors for me and I'm kind of realizing it points me towards being a lawyer and I'm not really sure what I want to do. What should people be doing in this scenario?

Sadie Jones: I would say, cast a wide net here and look at different ways that you can explore, different paths that you can follow, different internships that you can

get along the way, different things you can try out. I think that some people think that once you've decided on law school, it just automatically means you know exactly what you're going to do, and that's not true. Maybe you know you want to be a lawyer. There are also some jobs you can get that you don't necessarily need to be practicing law. So, there're lots of different areas. And I think that going in with an open mind and trying to figure out what's a good fit for you is better than just being like, "Well, I hear everyone talking about BigLaw. I'm going to go that path, I'm going to be a litigator even if it's not the right fit." So I would say, maybe you want to do some self-reflection, maybe you want to talk to a career coach, or even a therapist – we've talked about that. There're lots of different professionals that can help you figure out different things that might be a fit for you. And then once you have some ideas, then you can go along the path that might lead you to that, or at least to explore it.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. And I think things like internships, externships, pro bono projects, clinics – all these things are great opportunities to try out a field of law and see how it fits. So the more that you can do that, I think the better. There also are about a million books on these topics. I did a brief Google search, I turned up a number of lists actually prepared by different law schools that seemed really useful. And these were things that were in their library, they're probably in your library. We can link to them in the show notes, but I think the University of Kentucky had one, Stanford had one, UCLA had one. I'm sure many other places do. But this is a sort of thing, you can literally Google something like "career resources for law students" and you're going to find a lot of information. And you can look through those books and see what jumps out at you, and even just that can be a way to be like, "Oh, that seems interesting. Maybe I'll go read up about that."

Sadie Jones: Because it may be something you've never heard of. Not a lot of people, I think, go into law school knowing what all the different options are, especially if there aren't other lawyers in your family or you haven't been exposed to the legal profession as much. I also would encourage people to try things that are outside of their comfort zone. Even if it's like when you get to the time in law school where you can pick classes – maybe try something that isn't something you thought you would be interested in, just to see. Or like you said, lots of different real world projects or pro bono you can get involved in. Try something that isn't immediately saying, "This is something I've done before." I think that's great.

Alison Monahan: Right. I know you've worked, I think, at firms that did this, and I certainly have, where if you were a summer associate, they encouraged you, or in some cases essentially even made you take at least one assignment that was outside of your area of expressed interest. So if you came in like I did, saying, "I'm pretty sure I want to do litigation," and they're like, "Okay, that's great. Well, you're going to take this one corporate assignment just to see what it's like and see if you like it, because who knows." I'd never done anything like that before. It turns out I didn't really love it, but hey, you never know.

Sadie Jones: But I bet you're fine that you did that assignment. You're not like, "Oh, I really, really wish I hadn't wasted time on that."

Alison Monahan: No, not at all, not at all. And I did pro bono projects in areas I didn't end up practicing in, I did pro bono projects in areas I thought I might want to eventually practice in and found out I didn't. I'm really happy that I took that pro bono divorce case before I decided to go off and start a family law practice. It was like, that was not something I wanted to do every day, but I'm glad I did it once.

Sadie Jones: Exactly. You figure out what you don't like also, which I think is useful. And you don't really know until you try it.

Alison Monahan: Yeah.

Sadie Jones: So yeah, I think that you should use the opportunity of having three years of law school to explore different things and not just necessarily go on a set path the whole time.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. Some people know from day one that's what they want to do, and that's fine, but other people don't, and that's also fine. Alright, well, once I have a path, or maybe even multiple paths in mind, I need to get more practical, I need to get more granular. What are some resources that can be useful in that?

Sadie Jones: Well, there is so much information out there, and I think it can be overwhelming, but there are some places that have set information on different law firms. I really like NALP, because all the law firms submit a form that has a lot of information about their internships, but also their practice areas. It's just broken out really well and everyone participates pretty much. And then there's also Westlaw has a legal directory, Martindale-Hubbell, which has been around forever. You can look up everybody there.

Alison Monahan: I know. I feel like that's one of those where you're just like...

Sadie Jones: Very old school.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, super old school. I remember the first time I saw it, maybe I was a summer or something, they're like, "Oh, go look up opposing counsel in Martindale-Hubbell." I was like, "What are you even talking about? This is a bunch of crusty old dudes. What is this?" But everybody's in it.

Sadie Jones: Yeah, exactly, that's the thing. It's like you want to go to the places where anyone you might be interested is probably in these resources. There's also The American Lawyer, Chambers. You can just Google "different places that have

law firm information". But basically that's where I'd start because you can also do searches, filter by city or by size if you know certain things, or practice areas, so I think that's a great place to start.

Alison Monahan: I agree. And no single database that we mentioned on any of these topics is going to have every single possible person who's listed a job in it, because people put jobs all over the place. So I think you need to look at a couple of different ones. Then also, if you are interested in a place, look at their website – they may have posted something there that they didn't post on a different resource.

Sadie Jones: I totally agree, I think people miss that part. They think that everything's in one database that you can apply everywhere, but...

Alison Monahan: "If it's not in NALP, it must not exist."

Sadie Jones: Yeah. A lot of times you'll hear about something – I totally agree, go to their website. Maybe the application is only on their website, so follow their directions, whatever they want you to do.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, and this is, like you've mentioned before, even true once you're out of school. People, like a recruiter, might try to tell you, "Oh, they have this great exclusive offer." That's usually not true. They'd probably rather hire you through the website anyway, because they don't pay their fee.

Sadie Jones: Exactly. And for some reason, people seem to think they're going to get overlooked by applying through the website. I've had this conversation endless times, and I always say that from the recruiter perspective, that is where we're going to direct you, that is where we want you to put your stuff. It goes into the system automatically, you are not going to be ignored, somebody is going to see it, that's their job. So that's the best place to go, is directly to them.

Alison Monahan: Right, because that's literally the process they have set up. We'll just say, if anyone ever wants to apply to us, go to the website. Don't send me an email, because you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to tell you to go to the website. So yeah, if there's a process set up, it's in place, do the process. Everyone's going to be happier.

Sadie Jones: The other thing about the website is a lot of times they'll have latest news or cases or things like that, and so that's always good to be up to date on.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. Certainly, if you're going to interview at a place, you definitely want to look at their website, but that's a different question.

Sadie Jones: Yeah.

Alison Monahan: Alright, so let's talk a little bit about some public interest type options, some government options. Again, I did some research on this, I was surprised to find some of this stuff was out there. I mean, I was not surprised at kind of the biggest database of public interest positions. What is that one?

Sadie Jones: The biggest database is psjd.org, and that is going to be a database of all the public interest positions in one place, and so I think that's a great way to start If you have an interest in a public interest area.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, definitely. And hopefully your school, which may have a separate career office for public interest – if so, you definitely want to get to know those people. Sometimes it's rolled into the standard career services, but they're going to have access to these things. And again, no database has every job. You might find stuff on Indeed or something like that. But basically, if you're looking for a law school public interest position, this is probably where I would start. I was interested, actually, to find out about a couple of handbooks that relate to government stuff, because I know that's always a little tricky. All of that's published, typically on the government websites, but not necessarily in any one place. So, Arizona actually publishes a Government Honors & Internships Handbook and a Public Policy Handbook. I would guess that your school has access to these, but these provide things like application deadlines, qualifications, details, the mission of the employer, the organization. It sounds like they have a ton of stuff, deadlines, all kinds of stuff. And the same thing on public policy – if you're interested in policy around things like healthcare, national security, civil rights, con law – same thing. You've got the mission, you've got the structure, you've got links to the websites, you've got deadlines, you can search by city, topic, area. I was pretty amazed by this.

Sadie Jones: I think it's great if it's all in one place because these jobs do tend to... I think it gets a little overwhelming, because if you know you want a government job or a public interest job, you're applying to a lot of different places, and a lot of times, you have to go to a lot of different websites and there're different deadlines. So, I would be very organized with this. I'd probably have an Excel spreadsheet with all of these, because you're going to want to cast a wide net in these kinds of positions.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, and this is certainly with the federal government stuff, and the state stuff is separate, and local stuff is separate. You're going to have to do some legwork here, so I think any of these resources that kind of do at least some of that for you could be fantastic.

Sadie Jones: And get an idea of what all these jobs really are. I've noticed that some law students are not thinking about the skills they're going to get from different things; they just think about, "I don't want to work in the District Attorney's

Office practicing." But that doesn't mean that an internship during the summer won't be helpful. And generally, whether you're on the District Attorney's side or the Public Defender's side, you're going to get similar kind of skills. These jobs are also hard to get, so just make sure you're realizing what you're going to get out of these summer positions. It doesn't necessarily mean that's what you need to do later on.

Alison Monahan: Oh, for sure. If you're interested in doing litigation and say you're a 1L summer – anything that gets you in court is going to be fantastic for that. And you're probably going to spend a lot more time as a summer intern in the DA's Office or the Public Defender's Office actually in court than in any other type of job.

Sadie Jones: Totally agree. And I think it doesn't matter which one you get. You should apply to all of them.

Alison Monahan: Right. And people are like, "Oh, I've heard of Bronx Defenders." It's like, "Yeah, so has everybody else. I'm sorry, the top people at Columbia are applying there." You just have to be realistic about these are not necessarily the easiest roles, but maybe you could go to a different area of New York State or something and it might be much easier to get that job.

Sadie Jones: I think that's a good point too, is that those jobs are extremely competitive – probably just as competitive as BigLaw in a lot of ways, so I agree. You need to think about that and maybe apply to smaller programs and things like that.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, and a place that maybe not everybody wants to spend a few months, but you're willing to do that – that can open up a lot of doors for you.

Sadie Jones: I agree.

Alison Monahan: Alright, what about career fairs of all the different types? Are those useful?

Sadie Jones: Yes, I think it's super useful. Career fairs are great, because everybody's in one location and you can interview with lots of different places. And a lot of times there are career fairs that are focused on public interest or the government jobs. Obviously, there's OCI that we've talked about before, which is like a job fair in certain ways. And a lot of times, it's not just law firms; other places also interview at on-campus interviewing. There're also diversity career fairs. It kind of depends where you are, if you're willing to fly yourself somewhere. I would just do a search for these different career fairs, but I would put yourself out for as many as you can, because that's the easiest way to talk to a lot of people in one place.

Alison Monahan: For sure. And you can definitely see who's desperate to hire. I remember one of my law school roommates hadn't gotten a job for her 1L summer, so she went

to the public interest career fair, which was all the law schools in New York City. And even though she was kind of like, "I don't want to do public interest, I don't think", but she found some stuff that was pretty interesting, that she had never really known about or thought about, that was actually kind of business-focused, but also doing public interest. In the end, she took a law firm job, but whatever. She at least considered these other options. She was seriously considering them and they seemed like a good fit, and it was something that she literally would have had no idea existed.

Sadie Jones: I also think that's good practice for networking, so I don't really see a downside.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, exactly. It's like everybody's there for the same reason, which is to find a job. There are employers there who are looking for people to work for them. What's the downside here?

Sadie Jones: There's also sometimes practice area career fairs. I know there's an IP career fair that's in Los Angeles, I believe. So, I would also look for those if you know there's a certain area you want to practice in.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, so you can find some of this stuff on your own, your career services probably has at least the local ones. But ask some questions, look around. Like I said, I actually did some general research on this topic and I was pretty surprised at how much really solid information did pop up, because a lot of schools would put stuff together and they make them accessible outside of just their own students. Like Marquette for example – I found a good list of resources and ways to search for different jobs, and it was very specific, it gave you pros and cons of each resource. Stuff like that is really fantastic.

Sadie Jones: Yeah. Harvard and Yale both have career areas that are open to the public that you can see on their websites that I think are really useful, and they have templates and they have different lengths. So, I agree – just to do a search and see what comes up. Don't just assume because it's not your school you can't get into it. Some of it is locked, but not all of it.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, and I was actually surprised to learn that apparently certain schools have reciprocity to give access to Symplicity, which lists all the jobs to people who aren't there. Like say that you're in school in LA, but you really want to work in Kansas for whatever reason – you might actually be able to get access to their local job database if your school is willing to do the same. So, that's worth looking into as well.

Sadie Jones: Or sometimes your undergrad may give you access to even graduate school things, even if you're not in law school there, so you might as well ask. I think all this stuff it's good to be proactive. The worst that happens is like, "No, we can't give you access to that." Oh, well.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. The other group I would really think about talking to are your law librarians, because they probably have access to a lot of things and a lot of databases that maybe are not specifically job-focused, but around careers and things. They may have some good resources too.

Sadie Jones: Also, your local bar association a lot of times has specific areas for law students or young lawyers, and they might have a career-focused options or...

Alison Monahan: Networking.

Sadie Jones: Yeah, they love that.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, young lawyers of this, that – they love the networking.

Sadie Jones: Yeah, get involved.

Alison Monahan: We can link to these, but I found NALP has the /careerservices on their website, they also have a /lawstudentsgraduates that has information for recent graduates. The American Bar Association has a Career Center, ABA for Law Students has an area called Start Your Legal Career. People are putting information out there, so I think if somebody tells us that they can't find anything on this topic, I'm going to question that.

Sadie Jones: I totally agree. And I think if you're going to hire a professional to help you, or even if you're going to family or friends or anything, you should already have done some work going into it. You're going to get the most out of it by knowing what questions to ask and what you already found – then they can say, "Oh, have you looked here?" But if you come completely blank, "I have no idea" – that just to me kind of says you're not really trying, you haven't started anywhere. So, I would just suggest doing some of this before talking to somebody else about it.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. And I think there are different people you can talk to. If you really have no idea what you want to do with your life, you can find a life coach for that. Talk to that person for a little while before you enlist a career coach, who is much more specialized. The career coach is the person who's going to be like, "Alright, great. Maybe you have a few ideas, we can refine those." But mostly they're about like, "Here's the plan, let's figure how to get this done, here's what needs to happen." It's just a little hard, like you said, if you just go to an actual career coach and say, "Well, I don't really know what I want."

Sadie Jones: Or you come and you have no resume, you haven't started it yet. I would say you should always have something you started – and maybe it needs lots of

edits and you're not really sure where it's going – but to come with absolutely nothing feels like it'll be hard to get going.

Alison Monahan: Well, if nothing else, you probably had to do a resume to apply for law school, so you probably have done it at least once.

Sadie Jones: Come with that.

Alison Monahan: Yeah, it doesn't have to be perfect, but I do think as with anything – just like we were saying with career services – you get out of it what you put into it, to a certain extent. And yeah, people can help you and give you direction and you might just be totally stuck, but if you're really stuck and spiraling, that might be more of a question for a therapist, like, "What am I doing with my life?" Or a life coach.

Sadie Jones: Exactly.

Alison Monahan: All of these people could be really helpful, but I think when you're looking for resources, it's useful to think where you are in that process. So, am I the starting point of just, "I'm totally confused" – that's one type of resource. Maybe it's a book, maybe it's a person, whatever. Or maybe it's just you journaling until you realize, "Oh okay, this is something that I'm interested in exploring." But then you're ready to explore it, there's a whole different set of resources you need. And then once you're like, "Okay, I'm definitely committed to this path, I'm just trying to find the job" – that's another set of resources. So, it's going to be kind of fluid throughout this process.

Sadie Jones: Or there's also, "I know what I want to do, this is where I want to end up. Unfortunately, my grades, or my school, or where I'm now, aren't going to get me there right now." I think that's a situation where a career coach can be helpful, like, "Okay, well, here's where I think you could get to now, and here's our longer term plan, and here're the things I think will be useful." What they can't do is, poof! – make you fit into BigLaw.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. And I definitely know people who, for whatever reason, came out of school and through no real fault of their own, just kind of circumstantially, were not able to get the job they wanted in the beginning. In some cases those people plowed away and moved closer and closer and closer, and then say five years down the road, had the exact job they'd been looking forward to start with, and were pretty happy about it. But it wasn't like it just fell into their lap; they had to do a lot of things to get there.

Sadie Jones: Exactly, and that's what I always say to people, that I think there is a way to get there. Here are the different paths, and here are the steps that it would take. And maybe you realize you don't want to do that, that doesn't sound good, and

then you figure out something else. And there're a lot of people that thought they were going to do something, and then ended up somewhere else and are happy with that. You never know. But that's another area where I think a career coach can be helpful, in terms of you having a goal but maybe can't get to it immediately.

Alison Monahan: Right. Or if you have a goal and you're just for whatever reason, not taking the steps that if you took them, you probably could achieve that goal.

Sadie Jones: Totally.

Alison Monahan: A lot of people struggle with executive functioning issues, things like ADHD, they make it really hard. Maybe somebody is listening to this and is like, "Oh, just go make a spreadsheet." I can't just do that. So something like that is a place where someone can step in and be like, "Alright, I get what you're saying on that. I'm going to give you the format, we're going to work on some of them together, and then you're going to do it and I'm going to check in." That's the thing that you definitely get help with.

Sadie Jones: Or having someone to be accountable to – "I'm going to check in once a week and see where you are with it." That really helps some people.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. Or just figuring out next steps, like what is going to move you closer to this goal, how many resumes do you need to be sending out, all that kind of stuff – the nuts and bolts of it. If you're struggling with that type of stuff, I think there are a lot of ways you can get help.

Sadie Jones: Absolutely. I just think that you're paying for law school, you're going through this really big process of being there and doing all this work, so take advantage of every resource they have and everything that's available to you while you're a law student, because there's actually, in a lot of ways, more things that you can use then than there are once you're out and just in the real world.

Alison Monahan: Right, although some will still talk to you then, but probably not so intensively. But yeah, this is your time to explore options. And it's less threatening to your career if you do an internship and hate it, because then you've got three months that you're like, "Oh, this is miserable", versus thinking that's the job you want, applying yourself to get that job, getting that job, then getting out and being like, "I hate it."

Sadie Jones: Absolutely. And we've talked about that a lot with the 1L job being in a lot of ways sort of a freebie. So, remember that – it's a chance to explore with very little consequences.

Alison Monahan: Yeah. So, explore broadly anything that seems interesting, and then hopefully commit to something and get that first job. Alright, we're running out of time. Any final thoughts on this topic?

Sadie Jones: My final thought is, take advantage of your own network, and not just people you know who are lawyers. We've talked about this before, but put it out there to your family and friends, and update your LinkedIn, and you never know. Have these conversations, because I think that's a great place to start.

Alison Monahan: I agree. These are people who presumably care about you, they want the best for you, and would probably be happy to at least talk through some options. You probably have that friend who's always the person that people go to to talk through some options about things. Go find that person, talk to them and be like, "Hey, I would really like your advice on this." Most people would be happy to help.

Sadie Jones: Absolutely.

Alison Monahan: Alright. Well, we are out of time. Thank you 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 all of the things we've just talked about, you can check out CareerDicta.com. If you enjoyed this episode of the Law School Toolbox podcast, please take a second to leave a review and rating on your favorite listening app. We would 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 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!

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