



Kate Baxter-Kauf joined Lockridge Grindal Nauen in 2012. (File photo: Bill Klotz)

## Breaking the Ice: No argument over debate's influence on practice

By: Todd Nelson    December 6, 2018    0

**Name:** Kate Baxter-Kauf

**Title:** Associate, Lockridge Grindal Nauen

**Education:** B.A., communications studies, Macalester College; J.D., University of Minnesota Law School

Kate Baxter-Kauf, associate at Lockridge Grindal Nauen, attributes her affinity for class actions to her high school and college debate experience.

"The joke we always told that wasn't a joke was that you do basically a master's thesis worth of research every year on a national topic [in debate]," Baxter-Kauf said.

Those research and argument skills led to a professional opportunity when Baxter-Kauf interviewed for a summer associate position at Lockridge, which she joined in 2012.

The interview told her she would like antitrust law "because somebody says here's an industry, learn everything about it and get back to me," Baxter-Kauf recalled.

Baxter-Kauf's practice has included class actions stemming from data breaches involving Target and Home Depot, among others.

Such cases appeal to Baxter-Kauf's long-held interest in representing people who have been wronged.

Baxter-Kauf stays active in debate as a Minnesota Urban Debate League Advisory Board member. Debate is "fundamental to helping kids and adults understand civic engagement and learn how to advocate for themselves and their communities," she said.

### Q. What's the best way to start a conversation with you?

A. You probably have to stop me from talking first. I'm willing to talk about anything that other people are interested in. A good way to start a conversation with me is to joke about

"The West Wing" or quotes from "Hamilton."

**Q. What prompted you to study law and pursue it professionally?**

A. I'm a lifer. I started mock trial in ninth grade. I started debate in the 10th grade. My dad's a lawyer, my sister's a lawyer, my husband's dad is a judge and his brother's a lawyer. I like to make arguments and this is a great way to do it professionally.

**Q. What books are on your bedside table or e-reader?**

A. I'm in the Minnesota Women Lawyers Book Club and the Macalester alumni book club. The last book was "The Woman's Hour," about the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. My favorite this year is probably "A Gentleman in Moscow," about the Russian revolution. There's a new biography, "Prairie Fires," by Caroline Fraser. It was fascinating the way that Laura Ingalls Wilder and the books fit into the larger landscape of what laws were being passed and how their politics lined up with that part of the Midwest and the settling of the Midwest and westward expansion.

**Q. What is a pet peeve of yours?**

A. I don't like being late to things at all. Except I tend to simultaneously over-schedule myself so I'm perpetually running five minutes behind or forgetting to leave the last thing I was at because I'm talking to somebody.

**Q. What are your favorite aspects of being an attorney?**

A. I like the arguments; I like the hearings; I like talking to judges and to other practitioners. One reason I like doing pro bono work through the appellate public defender's office is that part of it is doing oral argument in front of the Court of Appeals.

**Q. Least favorite?**

A. I am pretty quintessentially Minnesota Nice, and so I'm not always great if others are not as nice as I think they should be. Because I'm pretty much always acting in good faith and trying to do the best that I can.

**Q. If someone visits you in your hometown, what would you take them to see or do?**

A. I would consider St. Paul my adopted hometown. One place I would definitely take them is my daughter's elementary school, Randolph Heights. It's longest-running neighborhood school in St. Paul and celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2016.

**Q. What if any is your favorite depiction of the legal professional in popular culture (books, films, TV)?**

A. I'm an Aaron Sorkin fanatic. I watched "A Few Good Men" most days of high school, and I have seen "The West Wing" all the way through. I love everything about the idealistic way that it portrays the law and lawyers. I've never met anyone who could make a deposition as entertaining as "The Social Network."

**Like this article? Gain access to all of our great content with a month-to-month subscription. Start your subscription for as little as \$32.**

Tagged with: BREAKING THE ICE

12/6/2018

Breaking the Ice: No argument over debate's influence on practice – Minnesota Lawyer

Copyright © 2018 Minnesota Lawyer, 222 South Ninth Street, Suite 900, Campbell Mithun Tower, Minneapolis, MN

55402 (612) 333-4244

