

New York Brief Q&A: Mylan Denerstein

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Hello again from the New York Brief Q&A, where we hear directly from New York lawyers, who shed light on who they are and what makes them tick. This week, I heard from Mylan L. Denerstein, a litigation partner at Gibson Dunn and co-partner-in-charge of the New York office. She handled the federal fraud case against New York real estate developer Robert Morgan, which ended in no jail time, among other cases. Since 2022, she's served as an independent monitor for the New York City Police Department, overseeing a court-ordered reform process. Before joining the firm, she served as counsel to then Gov. Andrew Cuomo. She told me what she's reading and why it helps to be underestimated. **Q: What's the biggest challenge facing attorneys in 2025?** MD: AI is the biggest challenge — and opportunity — for lawyers in 2025. It's not just changing how we work, but also how the entire profession operates. We must embrace AI as a tool for innovation — not a threat. For the skeptics out there, it's time to lean in, embrace, and improve AI! **Q: Your biggest mistake in early years of practice was?** MD: My biggest mistake at the start of my career was thinking everyone else knew exactly what they were doing except for me. The truth is that most people don't — at least not on day one. I came from a family of non-lawyers, so entering the legal world felt intimidating. Looking back, I see that learning on the job, working hard, asking questions, absorbing everything around me, and taking opportunities as they arose were exactly how I became confident in my ability to do an excellent job. **Q: What is one New York statute you'd either add or repeal?** MD: I would repeal the statute that gives the governor the authority to remove certain locally elected officials, such as the mayor. This just strikes me as not right in today's age. While elected officials should be held accountable, this law seems outdated. **Q: What book is on your bedside table?** MD: I'm an avid reader and always have books everywhere. I like to read books in print. I like turning the pages. Now, I'm reading "Lovely One" by Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson and "One Hundred Saturdays" by Michael Frank. As a lawyer, it's important to understand all kinds of people, situations, and perspectives, which is why I read all different types of books. Our job is all about persuasion and effective advocacy — and that starts with truly knowing your audience. The art of storytelling is the art of persuasion. **Q: Is it better to be a bulldog in the courtroom or underestimated?** MD: It's better to be underestimated. If people know what to expect, they can plan for that. When people don't see you coming, they're less prepared for the strength of your argument or the creativity of your approach. There's real power in quiet confidence and strategic surprise — it can be just as effective as being loud and argumentative. *Reproduced with permission. Published July 28, 2025. Copyright 2025 [Bloomberg Industry Group](https://www.bloomberglaw.com), 800-372-1033.*

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