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Excellence IN THE LAW 2021

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Associate, Todd & Weld, Boston

Northeastern University School of Law, 2017

Now a litigator at Todd & Weld who handles both criminal and civil matters, including commercial litigation, employment and civil rights, Tara D. Dunn's prior experience includes time in the environmental protection, trial and civil rights divisions of the Attorney General's Office as well as active duty on Space Command in the U.S. Air Force.

Q. *What's the most satisfying case or matter you've worked on so far?*

A. The most satisfying matter that I've worked on actually began when I was a law school student and has continued to grow since I've graduated. As a student and now a board member of the Civil Rights and Restorative Justice Project, the case that my research partner and I worked on gained national attention. It concerned a man by the name of Henry Peg Gilbert who was targeted and lynched back in the 1940s. His death, along with [those of] hundreds of other Black Americans in the pre-civil rights and civil rights era, was ruled an act of self-defense. However, after our research we were able to correct the record and provide evidence that he was in fact lynched at the hands of local police and a mob. The case has continued to evolve and has been a small part of a national discussion on restorative justice and reparations for the families of victims of racial violence. It's incredibly satisfying knowing that Mr. Gilbert's story and family are getting the recognition they deserve and I hope cases like Mr. Gilbert's continue to move the restorative

justice discussion forward.

Q. *What is the best piece of professional advice you ever received?*

A. Sit with it, learn from it and then let it go.

Q. *What's the biggest mistake you've made professionally?*

A. Making myself small for others.

Q. *What's one thing about you that might surprise people?*

A. I've earned my military "jump wings" by successfully completing five solo, free-fall skydives. I was able to earn them while I was a cadet at the Air Force Academy. I actually think the surprising part is that the routine I relied upon to jump out of planes is the same routine and frame of mind I utilize when I prepare for court hearings, a trial or any big professional event. You study hard, then you practice harder, and when it's time to perform you let it fly and react.

Q. *What's the most important thing you've learned since you started practicing law?*

A. Engage in client-centered advocacy. We're here to empower and enable our clients. **MLW**



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Vice president, Massachusetts Black Women Attorneys; member, Massachusetts Black Lawyers Association; fellow and trustee, Massachusetts Bar Foundation; board member, Civil Rights and Restorative Justice Project and Prisoners' Legal Services