

YLG Spotlight

Name: Justine Nielsen

Company: San Diego Land Lawyers

Why are you a ULI member?

In addition to providing educational opportunities through its programs, I find the Young Leaders Group one of the most compelling reasons to be a ULI member. As a real estate professional under 35, it is important to me to meet and form relationships with colleagues who are on a similar career track because you essentially grow up in the industry together and the relationships you form early on can be the most impactful.

When did you get involved?

I first became involved in ULI in 2010 per the advice of my mentor, Robin Madaffer. I had recently graduated from law school and wanted to learn more about the real estate business in San Diego. I immediately joined the Young Leaders Group and found it to be a great place to meet similarly-situated young professionals.

What does ULI mean to you?

ULI, and in particular the Young Leaders Group, has provided a forum for me to establish some really meaningful professional relationships and personal friendships. Whether I need advice from a mentor or a referral to a particular consultant, I know I can rely on my ULI network.

What is your current job and what types of projects are you working on now?

I'm a lawyer at San Diego Land Lawyers, specializing in land use, real estate and environmental regulatory matters in the San Diego region. We are working on a variety of projects ranging in size and scope from the redevelopment of Westfield UTC, to securing entitlements for PB Shore Club, to performing due diligence on potential sites for various developers.

What traits do you think define a successful leader?

Successful leaders often approach projects in a collaborative way and aren't afraid to admit what they don't know. They are problem-solvers rather than problem-makers. Successful leaders also possess a high-degree of interpersonal skills which attract others to them, enabling and enhancing collaboration and problem-solving.

What would you be doing if you weren't in real estate?

In my next life, I would love to own a specialty food and wine store.



What do you do in your spare time?

My husband John and I have a 17-month-old son, Jacob, who keeps us pretty busy. When we aren't spending time on our family boat or traveling, I love to cook and entertain with friends.

What has been the most important lesson in your career that you would like to pass along?

The real estate community in San Diego is very small so your reputation and how you treat your colleagues is more important than any job title or degree that you may have.

Favorite quote?

"Don't assume anything because the buck stops here."