



## You Make Your Own Experience: An Interview with Tal Lifshitz, J.D. '12

By Raegan Burke  
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***The 2012 graduate, who is an expert in complex litigation, cryptocurrency, digital asset, and blockchain, reflects on his Miami Law experience and dispenses sage advice to current and prospective students.***

Tal Lifshitz is a 2012 graduate of Miami Law who is now a partner at Kozyak, Tropin & Throckmorton, LLP. A son of Israeli immigrants, Lifshitz grew up in New Jersey until he moved to West Palm Beach in middle school. He majored in legal studies at the University of Central Florida. After college, Lifshitz decided to go to law school to differentiate himself in the legal profession by pursuing a [Miami Law Tax LL.M.](#) He says he chose Miami Law because of his lifelong love of the Hurricanes and the school's exceptional reputation (particularly for [tax law](#)).

During his first year of law school, Lifshitz became involved in the Tax Law Society. In the spring semester of his 1L year, he was recruited to run for the president position for his 2L year, a role he won. At the same time, Lifshitz was taking criminal procedure with [Ricardo Bascuas](#), where he developed an interest in becoming a Federal Public Defender. After earning stellar grades during his 1L year, he spent his first summer as a judicial intern for U.S. District Judge Kenneth Marra in West Palm Beach. Lifshitz says that his involvement as a judicial intern was partly spurred on by his desire to line himself up for a position with the Federal Public Defenders Office in Miami.

With this goal in mind, Lifshitz competed in the Moot Court Competition at the end of 1L. He then started his 2L year as a member of the University of Miami Law Review, the Charles C. Papy, Jr. Moot Court Board and as president of the Tax Law Society. Lifshitz became the 11th Circuit editor of UMLR, and his article "[Arguable Probable Cause: An Unwarranted Approach to Qualified Immunity](#)" was published in summer 2011. When asked about impactful professors, Lifshitz described Bascuas and Professor [Mary Anne Franks](#), who he was a Dean's Fellow for during two semesters. He was also a Dean's Fellow for Professor [Marc Fajer](#)'s property class. Overall, Lifshitz says he enjoyed his time at Miami Law and felt the school's

presence in the community opened countless doors for him. He says his connection with the school's incredible professors and the numerous extracurricular created the opportunities that got him where he is today.

After graduating summa cum laude, Lifshitz went to work as a judicial clerk for Marra. He said he knew the clerkship would expose him to more civil cases than criminal, but his experience as a judicial intern excited him to learn more about the civil side of law. Lifshitz eventually applied to litigation-focused firms in Miami and West Palm Beach during his clerkship. With the advice of one of his mentors at the time, Bob Josefsberg, Lifshitz joined Kozyak Tropin & Throckmorton in the complex commercial litigation department.

Lifshitz then started a career at KTT, marked by his excellent litigation skills. When asked about his favorite case, Lifshitz described a class action against Anheuser-Busch. KTT represented a group of class action plaintiffs, alleging Anheuser-Busch was mislabeling their beers and misleading customers to believe the beer was manufactured in Germany when it was manufactured in St. Louis, Missouri. Lifshitz says this case was pivotal to his career, not because it was about beer, but because of the opportunities it presented. He marked this as a "turning point in [his] career" because he took his first depositions ever in this case, argued in front of a federal court for the first time, visited Chicago for the first time (a city which he now loves), and worked with excellent lawyers on both the plaintiff and defense side. Lifshitz said it also helped the experience that retired U.S. Magistrate Judge John O'Sullivan, J.D. '85, heard the case.

In addition to his distinguished career at KTT, Lifshitz is actively involved in the legal community in Miami. Since his start at KTT, he has been encouraged to engage in the community. He recalls a piece of advice he received from a partner early in his career which has stuck with him: pick one thing you care about and devote all your time to that to make your contribution meaningful. For Lifshitz that has been the Federal Bar Association. While working as a clerk for Marra, Lifshitz became involved with the FBA, attending events and networking with its members. He eventually joined the board and now, Lifshitz is president of the South Florida chapter. Lifshitz also gives back to the Miami Law community by, among other things, working on the committee that plans the Miami Law Class Action & Complex Litigation Forum. This year, they will be putting on the seventh annual forum. He says that he has enjoyed watching the program excel over the years.

Lifshitz advises current law students: "you make your own experience." Lifshitz described the myriad activities he was involved in as a law student (law review, moot court, tax law society, the dean's fellow program), as well as the work he does now (complex class action litigation, co-chair of the KTT cryptocurrency, digital asset and blockchain group, president of the Federal Bar Association, and serving on the Miami Law class action forum committee). While balancing his work and community engagement is admittedly difficult at times, he said that "there is no magic to it." Since law school, Lifshitz has demonstrated an incredible drive to succeed and the skill and passion for doing so. In short, to take a page out of Lifshitz's book means involving yourself in all the opportunities presented to you and having the courage and flexibility to change your path as your career unfolds.