Q: Why did you choose to attend Caltech for your doctorate?

A: When I visited Caltech, it just felt nice and warm. It was small and intimate. And Jackie (Barton) was so enthusiastic about her science, and it got me excited about her science. She had a phenomenal lab with several women, which I very much appreciated. That was a major thrust for her—developing and promoting women.

Q: What led you to transition from chemist to attorney?

A: Looking back, it was a bit insane. I was in my fourth year there at Caltech, and I was like, I really don’t know if I want to be a researcher. Up to that point, my life made sense. And after that, it didn’t. But luckily, I had a number of friends in law, and they thought it would be a good fit for me. When I investigated it myself, I was like, yes, this seemed like the right step for me.

Q: On the surface, chemistry and law don’t seem like they have much in common. What skills did you pick up as a chemist that apply to the practice of law?

A: I learned, especially from the Ph.D. program, to see the big picture. I also learned to spot issues, spot problems, and think of creative solutions to those problems. It’s the same thing in law.

Q: In addition to the skills you developed as a chemist, does chemistry knowledge help you in your capacity as a lawyer?

A: Absolutely. We’re a small molecule company that employs a lot of chemists. We’re moving into other areas, but that’s where we started from. Being a chemist here has been more than helpful. I understand where the chemists are coming from.

Q: What advice would you like to pass on to high school students?

A: Don’t limit yourself. If I had followed the straight-line path that every single chemist follows, I wouldn’t be doing something that brings me such joy now. But by allowing myself to explore other options, I found what made sense for me and my life.