



## For Attorney Samantha Farish, Aligning Skills and Passions Leads to The Veterans Consortium

The veteran community has always been a part of Samantha Farish's life. Her parents met while serving in the Navy aboard the USS Lexington, where her mother was one of the first enlisted women to be stationed as a crewmember on an aircraft carrier. Her grandfather was also a veteran, serving in the Vietnam War.

"I was told at a young age that he disliked discussing the war," Farish said. She later discovered that he had lasting health issues due to his military service.

Needless to say, Farish has an enormous respect for the hardships faced by those who serve.

Farish went to law school with the goal of helping individuals that have limited access to justice, but it wasn't until she started law school at The George Washington University that she realized there was a legal specialty that would allow her to help veterans overcome those hardships.

**"I wanted to help people who struggled with limited access to justice. My goal was helping others, and for me that meant becoming a public defender."**

Farish took a class in veterans' law in law school having no idea that she could make a career out of it.

"I found the class fascinating and realized that it had two things that aligned with my passions: honoring veterans and helping those with limited access to justice.

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“You’re able to help veterans navigate their VA claims through the system, which might otherwise be incredibly confusing.”

That class led her to an externship at [The Veterans Consortium](#), a nationwide pro bono organization that, according to its website, “represents veterans unjustly denied benefits or compensation earned from military service.”

**“There are so many ways to help, so it’s just a matter of figuring out where your skills and passions align.”**

As The Veterans Consortium’s credo states: “We believe that our veterans, our nation’s defenders, deserve the care, benefits and compassion they were promised and the best legal services, free of charge, to meet their challenges.”

After law school, Farish became a Fellow in the Veterans Legal Corps, sponsored by Equal Justice Works. Equal Justice Works serves as a matchmaker between post-service organizations such as The Veterans Consortium and law firms, corporations and anonymous donors who are interested in funding these young lawyers.

Her current Equal Justice Works fellowship is funded by the law firm Morgan, Lewis & Bockius.

Farish would be the first to say that doing public service work isn’t always the easiest route for attorneys.

“Student loans are a serious deterrent for a job like mine,” Farish said, suggesting that public service isn’t among the legal industry’s most lucrative areas of practice.

“I’m one of those people who is depending on public service loan forgiveness.”

For those interested in public service, but hesitant due to the lower earning potential, Farish advises that attorneys investigate public service loan forgiveness before giving up their dream of helping those in need.

“You just have to find your passion.”

**“There are pitfalls that veterans can fall into at any moment.”**

According to Farish, her job representing veterans sent back to the VA on remand is very important for veterans who often struggle with the complexity of the system and the paperwork required.

“Most of the veterans who get sent back to the VA don’t know what to do. I make sure their paperwork is properly completed, and then represent the veterans in helping implement the court’s remand orders with the VA.”

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“It’s not uncommon for a veteran to work 20 years on a claim,” she said. “In veterans circles, it’s known as the hamster wheel. The idea is that the claim is constantly moving, but they’re never getting anywhere.

“I believe the VA is trying to help veterans,” Farish said. “But the process has become so complicated, and there are too many hoops to jump through, which means these attempts to help can backfire.”

Leave it to a child of two veterans to understand the struggles they face and fight to help correct them.

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Farish and the entire legal team at The Veterans Consortium give everything they have to helping the veterans that come to them for help. With so many veterans requiring help, they have to get the most out of every minute they spend.

That’s why they use Lexis for researching previous cases that might provide guidance in helping with today’s cases.

“The term highlights (in Lexis) make jumping to the relevant portion of the decision a breeze.”

Farish and other attorneys at The Veterans Consortium are also heavily dependent on the [Veterans Benefit Manual](#), available as a hardback or e-book through the LexisNexis® store, to guide them through their work advocating for veterans.

“We call it our Bible. We use it all the time.”

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