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Sheila Long: Hello, everybody.

[0:00:30] Welcome to the Head of The Table podcast. My name is Sheila Long and I will be your host for today's show. I am here today with a very special guest, one of my long-time members at MalamaDoe. Her name is Jackie Boynton and she is the owner of the Law Offices of Jacqueline Boynton. So, welcome to the show, Jackie.

Jacqueline Boynton: Thank you, Sheila.

Sheila Long: So, great to have you on.

Jacqueline Boynton: Well, I love being at MalamaDoe...

Sheila Long: Okay, great.

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Jacqueline Boynton: ...and it is the perfect place for me to have landed after a long 35-year legal career and working in a variety of different offices that fit my needs at that time and MalamaDoe was a great place for probably my last five years of my practice.

Sheila Long: Okay, wow. Well, thank you so much for saying that. So, glad to have you. Jackie and I, we sit near each other. I'm sure those of you who are in office settings, you understand.

[0:01:32]

So, we check in every day. Don't you think, Jackie?

Jacqueline Boynton: Right. It's very fun. It's fun to have - I have little roommates. Well, big roommates. I would say young roommates.

Sheila Long: Right.

Jacqueline Boynton: And there are other places where I can go when I need privacy or when I need to have client meetings. So, I'm very happy to be there. But I've been an attorney for 35 years and I started when I was 35-years-old.

Sheila Long: Really?

Jacqueline Boynton: I started going to law school when I was 35-years-old.

[0:02:01]

So, I went to Marquette because I was living here, raising a family, and - then back in the old days, I was one of the oldest students.

Sheila Long: Okay.

Jacqueline Boynton: Now, I think that they branched out a little bit at Marquette. But anyway, it was a great experience. And I started working in public service, legal action, public defender, doing criminal work and public service - public interest work. And then, I started working in law firms.

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My interest mainly was in civil rights and employment law representing plaintiff employees and also labor law representing unions.

Sheila Long: Okay. Neat.

Jacqueline Boynton: And so, I did that for a long time. And then, I did a couple of other what I consider to be interesting things. I worked for small firms, large firms. One of my best experiences was working with someone named Peter Earl.

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We worked together for a long time. And two of the cases that we worked on, this is before what I'm doing right now, one was, we did some of the first lead poisoning cases representing children...

Sheila Long: Really?

Jacqueline Boynton: ...who were poisoned by paint chips in older homes, in mainly the central city of Milwaukee

Sheila Long: Wow. That is very rewarding.

[0:03:30]

Jacqueline Boynton: It was then because - and it was sad...

Sheila Long: Yeah, that's true.

Jacqueline Boynton: ...and it wasn't that hard to find kids.

Sheila Long: Oh, really?

Jacqueline Boynton: We worked with the health department who were testing kids and for high lead levels. And there would be landlords. These were mainly very, very low-income housing and the landlords all had insurance. And so, we would sue the landlords for negligence.

Sheila Long: Mm-hmm.

Jacqueline Boynton: And the insurance companies would cover the damages and the future damages to these kids.

[0:04:04]

Sheila Long: Wow.

Jacqueline Boynton: So, that was kind of the heyday of bringing those types of cases because then, insurance companies decided that they would put writers on each insurance...

Sheila Long: Wow.

Jacqueline Boynton: ...policy saying that they were not going to represent any negligence due to lead paint poisoning.

Sheila Long: Wow. Really? It's so interesting to see how the legal landscape has changed over the years.

[0:04:30]

Jacqueline Boynton: Right.

Sheila Long: Yeah. I remember just when personal injury was like a big deal in the 80s. It's because I grew up. As you know, my dad was a lawyer. He is a lawyer. And so, I would just listen to that. But initially, the insurance companies were so receptive.

Jacqueline Boynton: Right. So, we would do settlements for kids that would get the money when they were 18. And I still am in touch with some of those kids. It's probably been 25 years.

Sheila Long: Wow.

Jacqueline Boynton: Then, the other case that was particularly interesting where the law has definitely changed or not really developed...

[0:05:05]

Sheila Long: Okay.

Jacqueline Boynton: ...is the gerrymandering case. The original one was brought in 2011...

Sheila Long: Okay.

Jacqueline Boynton: ...when the maps were redrawn every 10 years.

Sheila Long: Okay.

Jacqueline Boynton: And it was - what the wretched maps we have now, we still have those maps 10 years, it's not going by. And there've been a number of lawsuits. But I was part of a team of three or four lawyers who brought the first

lawsuit in 2011 saying that they were basically unconstitutional on many different legal areas.

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But the one area we represented - our client was Voces de la Frontera...

Sheila Long: Oh, really?

Jacqueline Boynton: ...a Latino group.

Sheila Long: Okay.

Jacqueline Boynton: And the claim was that they had packed all Latinos into one district...

Sheila Long: Okay.

Jacqueline Boynton: ...instead of spreading them geographically over a very - what would be a reasonable way to draw a map for the assembly district...

Sheila Long: All right.

[0:06:00]

Jacqueline Boynton: ...which would mean if there was ever going to be a Latino representative, it was going to be very difficult to have one in the other district that should have been more racially equal.

Sheila Long: Alright.

Jacqueline Boynton: And there were a number of other claims. Our claims were the only ones that prevailed.

Sheila Long: Really?

Jacqueline Boynton: And those are the claim - only claims that have prevailed on all of the lawsuits that have now gone to the Supreme Court.

Sheila Long: Congratulations.

Jacqueline Boynton: Um, because the Supreme Court is now saying, partisan gerrymandering is not something they want to take up legally or make court decisions about.

[0:06:33]

But the reason we're able to do that, what enabled to prevail on it was that they don't allow - the constitution does not allow racial discrimination in gerrymandering. And it was fairly obvious that they tried to pack a

district with one race and then keep the whole other district very white, um, and perhaps voting for a different constituency.

Sheila Long: Okay. So, you're very interested in voting.

[0:07:00]

Jacqueline Boynton: I am.

Sheila Long: Yeah.

Jacqueline Boynton: Yes, access to voting, um, and whatever, you know, people can do to support getting out the vote.

Sheila Long: Okay. Do you want to talk about any, um, work that you do? I know - I've definitely have heard things. That's worth...

Jacqueline Boynton: Well, I've been working with Voces de la Frontera for years and I mainly work in their advocacy side...

Sheila Long: Okay.

Jacqueline Boynton: ...which is called Voces de la Frontera Action. And we do lobbying and then electoral work.

[0:07:31]

But we also run the - get out to vote program - most of the program from that part of the organization. It's affiliated with Volseus Dela Frontero. And so getting out the Latino vote is very important and educating people about why and if they have the right to vote, um, you know, documented people, but also educating other people about the importance of civic engagement and advocating for the populations that live, you know, mainly on the South side.

[0:08:03]

Sheila Long: Okay. Wow. That's great. So, what inspired you to get involved in that? Was it that initial case with the gerrymandering?

Jacqueline Boynton: No, I was involved way before that. Uh, I don't know what inspired me. I think just civil justice type things that, um, trying to add some value as a white woman.

Sheila Long: Okay.

Jacqueline Boynton: Um, trying to add my legal understandings and interest to add value to the community.

[0:08:31]

Sheila Long: Okay. Great. Well, thank you for doing that. It's wonderful. It's so important to have diversity and just to make sure everyone's voices are heard.

Jacqueline Boynton: Yup.

Sheila Long: If there's only one Latino serving in the assembly...

Jacqueline Boynton: Right.

Sheila Long: ...they're really not serving the needs of Latinos. You can't just have one person. It's hard enough to be the only person in the room.

Jacqueline Boynton: Right. Yes.

Sheila Long: Of your whatever it is, being a woman, whatever, being from a certain country, with certain age, there's a lot of different ways where it's just hard, which is why we have this podcast, the Head of the Table, because we want to have more people taking initiatives.

[0:09:08]

So, thank you for all your work.

Jacqueline Boynton: One of my other groups is called Women Lead and it is...

Sheila Long: Okay.

Jacqueline Boynton: ...a bit like a statewide EMILY's list where we support women - progressive women candidates.

Sheila Long: Okay.

Jacqueline Boynton: And that's been really interesting because women welcome and need and want support from other women and from other people in getting out the word.

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So, I think it helps everybody. It helps to be in my side of it where I can just add some value to their being able to reach public office and get elected and also, I think it helps the candidates feel like there's someone out there covering their back.

Sheila Long: Definitely. Just to know that, um, no matter - just even to be able to call if something happens that's like questionable that you know that you have people that will support you.

Jacqueline Boynton: Right.

Sheila Long: And also, maybe if you do need some advocacy, that's great to have a group behind you.

[0:10:01]

So, thank you for doing that. On behalf of all the candidates out there and just everybody - all those women who are inspired to run for office and to really take that next step so that more women can be represented in the political process.

Jacqueline Boynton: And running for office is a thankless task of going door-to-door calling for money - anyway, it's very difficult. So, I really admire women who do it. I'm kind of a background type person in these issues.

Sheila Long: You're a background?

[0:10:30]

Jacqueline Boynton: Um, and one of my other areas now legally, um, which gets the idea of Head of the Table...

Sheila Long: Okay.

Jacqueline Boynton: ...is that I feel like I'm one of the regional experts on non-profit law and on starting non-profits and particularly, community-based, you know, women, youth oriented, racial diversity type non-profits.

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And, um, I know there are experts in the non-profit legal field who work at other larger firms and represent hospitals and, you know, universities but there's very few people involved at the community level to start organizations and to make it more accessible for people to do that kind of work in the community, to build up their communities.

Sheila Long: Wow, that is really wonderful and such - it's nice to just have you really being, um, a leader and change for that.

[0:11:31]

Jacqueline Boynton: Yup.

Sheila Long: Is there anything that you would say to people who are thinking about starting a community organization or - I know they can reach out to you to get services. You can help them set up.

Jacqueline Boynton: Right. Well one thing I always tell and I teach it at UWM in Marquette. I teach non-profit law and organization...

Sheila Long: Okay.

Jacqueline Boynton: ...and issues in public service, so I worked with a lot of young people that way, who are also interested in working at non-profits and perhaps starting them.

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So, it's a really good area for me to get feedback and to know what's a value to let people know so that they feel confident about what a non-profit organization can do. But the first thing I tell people is that you need a network in the area you're interested in. So, if it's youth recreation, if it's women and the arts, you know, if it's voter rights, there are many groups who, in Milwaukee, who are doing work.

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And so, you can either both learn from those groups or you can join up and be a project of a group. Because being a non-profit on your own and a lot of people want to have their own non-profit and...

Sheila Long: Okay.

Jacqueline Boynton: ...be in charge of it and, you know, be the founder and do good work that way, it's a lot of work, a lot of fundraising. And so, I really tell people to educate themselves about what's going on in the community first.

Sheila Long: Yeah, it's important to do your due diligence because, you know, it might already exist and you could really use your talents to help an existing organization.

[0:13:06]

But if you have an idea that's not out there and it's just wonderful to be able to organize the communities and help them grow.

Jacqueline Boynton: Right. And so, I am still around after people start organizations and it's always fun when someone gets back to me with - it could be a bad legal problem but also just gets back to me with a question.

[0:13:30]

So, I can follow up and know that they are alive and well, which often what happens is, something they'll start up and then a year later, I'll read about it in the newspaper.

Sheila Long: Oh, no.

Jacqueline Boynton: Well, but I'll be really happy, I'm like, "Oh, they're doing so well."

Sheila Long: Oh, great. Yeah.

Jacqueline Boynton: It's - not read a bad legal issue on the paper.

Sheila Long: Yeah. That's always helpful.

Jacqueline Boynton: That they are alive and thriving.

Sheila Long: Alright. So, head of the table, what does that mean to you?

Jacqueline Boynton: Well, I think it means being - having the confidence to say that I'm very good in this area of the law.

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And you know, I do get calls where I'm not able to - on the first call to make someone feel like I'm going to add value to their issue, with their non-profit organization issue and they just don't call me back.

Sheila Long: Oh. You have to be honest though, and that's really important, right?

Jacqueline Boynton: Yeah, right. So, - but when I do work with people I feel like I can give them something of value and I'm very economical for - especially for startups, I'm very appreciative of founders as particularly in the inner city.

[0:14:37]

Sheila Long: Okay.

Jacqueline Boynton: So, I think I make it accessible for people. And I have a great place to meet at MalamaDoe.

Sheila Long: Alright. You do. But yeah, we have conference rooms available where you can meet and we're expanding. Alright, well, great. So, - do you have any role models or influencers? People who have really helped you kind of - I'm a big fan of the women who came before us who helped pave our path because I know it's a lot easier for me because of the groundwork that was laid 20 years before me.

[0:15:06]

Jacqueline Boynton: Right, that's true. Well, there's actually lots of women, particularly, who are my role models but I do - I was thinking about this that probably 40 years ago, a dad of someone I knew - dad of a guy I knew who happened

to be a lawyer - and the guy - the dad was a lawyer and he seem like he was old. He was maybe 65.

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He said the value of being a lawyer is that you can always practice your craft no matter how old you are. There's no endpoint, there's no forced retirement, there's no point where - it's not like being a firefighter or something, where you lose your ability to do it, and I really love that concept that you can take it with you. So, I think of him as one of my role models but there are two women in particular. Of course, Ruth Bader Ginsburg who was so determined and is so determined, and never took her eye off the prize.

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I think that she was extraordinary and she was a pioneer. And then locally, Barbara Zack Quindel is a an attorney here who does the kind of law I really respect, labor law and employment law, and has developed and has worked in her own firm along with other attorney for 40 years and kept that firm together, expanded it, merged with other firms, hired, fired, added, subtracted, and also did - had a great law practice.

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So, it takes a lot of work to be a lawyer. So, she's one of the people I've always been in awe of.

Sheila Long: Okay, great. Well, shout out to her, yeah, and it's just great to know that you're not the only person out there and just to have people who have helped you.

Jacqueline Boynton: Right.

Sheila Long: Or who - even they don't even know that they've helped you. Does she know this?

[0:17:00]

Jacqueline Boynton: No, maybe someday she'll listen to this.

Sheila Long: Yeah, well tag her. We'll put her on the podcast or someday, someone will help us figure that out, right. Alright, great, okay. Do you have any accomplishments that you're the most proud of?

Jacqueline Boynton: Well, talking about those law cases and in terms of my legal work, I am - those were the high points besides my teaching which I've really enjoyed.

Sheila Long: Really? Cool.

[0:17:28]

Jacqueline Boynton: I've been teaching for 15 years and it's just fun to inspire people, to enjoy the law. My students have never a read legal case for the most part.

Sheila Long: Really? Okay, I was wondering, who takes these classes? It's not law students normally?

Jacqueline Boynton: No, it's through the Helen Bader Institute of Nonprofit Management, at UWM, is one group, and they - this is a requirement for the master's program.

Sheila Long: Really?

Jacqueline Boynton: So, they all have to come through me.

Sheila Long: Okay, great.

[0:18:00]

Jacqueline Boynton: They also have a certificate where I am an elective, so - but those are basically the same kinds of students where there - a lot of them - they are anywhere from the age of 23 to 43.

Sheila Long: Okay.

Jacqueline Boynton: And some were making big career switch, some are adding some value to already being in a non-profit world. Hopefully the Masters gets them somewhere, maybe a raise...

Sheila Long: You never know.

Jacqueline Boynton: ...little more expertise, but I think it's all new information for people.

Sheila Long: Okay.

[0:18:30]

Jacqueline Boynton: I'm very adamant about, "Please tell me if you've learned this in any other class. I want it to be all new and exciting for people."

Sheila Long: Oh, really? Neat. Yeah, it's - I actually was doing a podcast the other day and I remembered something that - it was an adjunct professor, he told us and it just always stuck with me. So, you'd never know what you're teaching, when it will come back to help.

Jacqueline Boynton: Right.

Sheila Long: And people, a lot of - a lot of times, you don't reach back and let people know, but thank you from all those students that you've had and the people that you've inspired.

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Jacqueline Boynton: And then also Marquette has a public service, public interest pod that the graduate students are coming through.

Sheila Long: Okay.

Jacqueline Boynton: And that class is going to be a non-profit law and organization, but it's called Issues in Public Service.

Sheila Long: Okay.

Jacqueline Boynton: So, they have a real emphasis in going being within the community and so are the Catholic, the Jesuit philosophy of giving back to the community.

[0:19:29]

I think the program has a lot to do with that kind of a push for what Marquette stands for, so that - that's very interesting.

Sheila Long: Great. Well, thanks for serving and for helping to educate, and for all of the work that you've put in, to really making Milwaukee more of a just Milwaukee, which was one of other podcast with Sammie Avenir. She's working towards making it a more just Milwaukee, but it sounds like you've really laid the ground work for that.

Jacqueline Boynton: Yeah, thank you.

Sheila Long: So, thanks.

Jacqueline Boynton: Thank you.

Sheila Long: So, where can people get in touch with you?

Jacqueline Boynton: At MalamaDoe.

[0:20:00]

Sheila Long: At MalamaDoe, but you need social, remember?

Jacqueline Boynton: No, forget it. I'd say email, jacque@jboynton.com

Sheila Long: Okay.

Jacqueline Boynton: I am deeply hidden in Facebook. I'm sure if you look hard enough, you could find me.

Sheila Long: Okay, but not the best avenue. Do you have a website?

Jacqueline Boynton: I do have a website, but I'm a little lame. And if you emailed me, you'd get my phone number and you can call me up.

Sheila Long: Okay, alright. So, email is the best way.

[0:20:28]

We did - for our members, we have their photo, if they - they use our space and a link to their online profile. So, you do have a website.

Jacqueline Boynton: Yeah.

Sheila Long: So, if you do want to look and see it, you can do that, or just email Jacque and come on in. So, thanks a lot for being on our podcast.

Jacqueline Boynton: Thank you, Sheila, for all the work you do.

Sheila Long: Oh, thank you.

Thanks to everybody for listening to the Head of the Table podcast. Please feel free to look for us wherever you find your podcast. Let your friends know as well.

Thanks, everyone.