

Profile (/dailybusinessreview/profile/)

# 'I was gone': Miami Lawyer Left a Strict Religious Group to Start a New Life

"I would have never guessed this would be my life story," said Eduardo Maura of Ayala Law, who spent eight years strict religious community in Peru before pursuing commercial litigation in the U.S.

By [Raychel Lean](https://www.law.com/dailybusinessreview/author/profile/Raychel-Lean/) | August 23, 2019 at 02:50 PM

- f
- in
- twitter
- envelope
- document (/http)



Eduardo Ayala Maura, Ayala Law. Courtesy photo.

[Eduardo A. Maura](https://www.lawayala.com/immigration-lawyer-in-miami-profile/) lived a celibate life in a religious community in Peru before he ever thought about starting Miami firm Ayala Law.

Recruited as a teen after high school, Maura became a "consecrated layperson" in a far-right Catholic group south of Lima, similar in some ways to a monastery, led by priests who prescribed a strict exercise and studying regime. The lifestyle

## Trending Stories

- 1 [In GirlsDoPorn Trial, Jane D Law Grad Emerges as Central Figure](https://www.law.com/there-girlsdoporn-trial-jane-doe-law-grad-emerges-as-central-figure/)  
THE RECORDER (/THERECORDER/)
- 2 [Jones Day's Social Media Attacks Prove No Delay Is Needed, Ex-Associates Say](https://www.law.com/amer-days-social-media-attacks-prove-no-delay-is-needed-ex-associates-say/)  
THE AMERICAN LAWYER (/AMERICANLAWYER/)
- 3 [In Law Firms, 'Caste System Persists Among Attorneys & Business Professionals](https://www.law.com/daily-law-firms-caste-system-persists-among-attorneys-a-business-professionals/)  
THE AMERICAN LAWYER (/AMERICANLAWYER/)
- 4 [Meet the Former Supreme Court Clerks Suing Jones D](https://www.law.com/ame)

was "intense," as Maura tells it, centering around the idea of being half monk, half soldier.

"In retrospect, I think that must have helped me later in life, in terms of the discipline that they built in me, even though I'm not a Catholic anymore and I'm not a religious person today," Maura said.

After eight years, Maura began dreaming of the family he wasn't supposed to have, and one day broke his vow by getting involved with his secretary. That was a sign, Maura says, that he was unhappy.

"I felt alone," he said. "And I felt like, 'I'm not about to live a double life. This is not for me.'"

It was tough breaking away from the community, to whom the dichotomy of heaven and hell was very real, according to Maura.

"They have this idea like, 'This is your vocation and if you don't do that you're going to go to hell.' It sounds radical, but it is like that," Maura said. "They obviously couldn't kidnap me, but the amount of pushback for me not to leave was super strong. But I always had a very strong personality, too, and I made my decision. I was gone, in my mind."

Maura had quickly climbed the ranks. He ran a pastoral center and taught philosophy and logic at the community's university. But he'd made up his mind, and left for Lima without money, a job or a degree. After months of searching for a job in what was then a recession-struck city, Maura, then-25, was hired as a hotel bellboy.

"I went from that to being happy having a job carrying bags," Maura said. "I didn't care."

But when the position was canceled two days before his start date, Maura said his mother encouraged him to look for opportunities in the U.S. His mother had been suffering from cancer, but her outlook was good after chemotherapy, and Maura wanted to help support her.

## New Opportunities

Maura moved to Boca Raton in 2002, where he stayed with a Peruvian friend he'd met on MSN Chat—back when the internet was an optional commodity that most people accessed through an internet cafe.

"It didn't turn out very well," Maura said.

It turned out the man was gay and had gotten the wrong idea about their friendship, according to Maura. When Maura moved out, his ex-roommate badmouthed him to his employers, Publix and Dunkin Donuts, and he was fired.

Maura later worked as a restaurant delivery driver, and was soon promoted to cook, then manager, partner and joint owner. But the restaurant became a victim of the 2007 recession, and Maura got a job scanning documents at a law firm.

"It was the most boring job I've ever had," he said.

[the-supreme-court-clerks-suing-jones-day/](#)

[THE AMERICAN LAWYER \(/AMERICANLAWYER/\)](#)

5 ['My Wife Is Dying': Lawyer's Complaint Claims Judge Demanded Court Appearance \(https://www.law.com/texas-wife-is-dying-lawyers-complaint-claims-judge-demanded-court-appearance/\)](#)

[TEXAS LAWYER \(/TEXASLAWYER/\)](#)

But the job introduced Maura to legal work, and he realized, "I could do this myself."

Maura's philosophy professorship from Peru translated into college credits, providing a quick path to a bachelor's degree at Florida International University, where he paid for his studies with a locksmith job.



**Eduardo A. Maura.** Courtesy photo.

Maura said he was used to living with scarcity, having grown up in a working-class family of five. So law school offered the promise of something he deemed crucial: financial security. After graduating in 2011, he joined Coral Gables firm Rivero Mestre, where he says he learned the foundations of high-quality commercial litigation. But without a full-time job offer, Maura moved on to Vernis & Bowling, where he said he soon felt like he didn't belong.

So he started a firm from his studio apartment on Le Jeune Road.

"I just bought a printer and I created a company," he said.

He began with immigration cases, with the help of law professor **Juan Carlos Gomez**, who leads FIU's immigration and human rights law clinic. Now, at Ayala Law in Brickell, Maura handles complex commercial cases, facing off against some of the largest firms in the world.

But he still works on immigration and even litigates against towing companies. In Gomez's view, that's because Maura never gives up on clients—even those who don't have the money or capacity to seek help. Gomez and Maura have worked on one man's immigration case for several years. Gomez says what Maura does for the client borders on social work.

"Even when it's almost hopeless, Eduardo follows up and finds a way to keep it going, to try to keep this man with his family," Gomez said.

### 'Why not?'

Maura's former supervisor at Rivero Mestre **Catherine Grieve** describes him as "fearless" and "unstoppable."

"When facing off against highly experienced adversaries or a mega-firm, Eduardo is excited for, not daunted by, the challenge and sees it as a tremendous opportunity to learn and grow," Grieve said.

Maura insists he's "not the brightest lawyer out there," but says he hopes to inspire young attorneys struggling to forge their own path, worried they don't measure up, fear they're not good enough or that they don't belong. His message: With discipline and a strong work ethic, they could compete with anyone.

"It's always, to me, been, why not? Why do I have to be what some former firm told me I should be?" Maura said. "You can play in the major leagues, in the most complex cases, in the best forums, in the best courts if you really have the passion and the work ethic."

Maura's expertise in Aristotelian logic has shaped his approach to litigation.

"Solid reasoning wins cases," he said. "If you're just reacting to every movement the other side is making, you're losing the case."

Now, Maura is gearing for a mass torts trial against a U.S. corporation over claims that its work in a Peruvian mining plant caused 1,200 children to contract lead poisoning. He's co-counsel with two Missouri attorneys, while the defense is flanked by 16 lawyers from Ivy league colleges.

In other litigation, Maura filed a [putative class action lawsuit](#) **Maura playing tennis at 16.**  
Courtesy photo.



(<https://www.law.com/dailybusinessreview/2018/09/21/bullied-stores-sue-miami-mall-for-sparking-mass-exodus-over-poor-conditions/>) against owners of the Miami Mall of the Americas on behalf of more than 130 plaintiffs, who claim retail giants Costco and Home Depot received preferential treatment over their small businesses. A judge will rule on class certification in November.

When Maura's not working, he's exploring the world with fiancée and attorney **Pamela Ferretjans**—in small increments.

"We took a five-day trip to Thailand. We took a four-day trip to Dubai," he said. "We're crazy."

Maura is also a lifelong tennis player and launched the Ayala Open in July, a local tournament for local professional and amateur players.

"I would have never guessed this would be my life story," Maura said. "You can do wonders if you put in the work, focus and are passionate about it."

### **Eduardo A. Maura**

**Born:** December 1976, Lima, Peru

---

LEAN ADVISER LEGAL (/LEAN-ADVISER/STATIC/LEAN-ADVISER/?CMP=LARMLDC)

**Education:** Florida International University College of Law, J.D., 2011; Florida International University, B.A. in Philosophy, 2008

**Experience:** Attorney and president, Ayala Law, 2013-present; Associate, Vernis & Bowling, 2012-2013; Associate, Rivero Mestre, 2011-2012

**More profiles:**

['I'm Not Going to Hide Who I am': Attorney John 'Jack' Lord Jr. Champions LGBTQ Rights \(https://www.law.com/dailybusinessreview/2019/08/09/im-not-going-to-hide-who-i-am-attorney-john-jack-lord-jr-champions-lgbtq-rights/\)](https://www.law.com/dailybusinessreview/2019/08/09/im-not-going-to-hide-who-i-am-attorney-john-jack-lord-jr-champions-lgbtq-rights/)

[You've Been Served: How Marko Cerenko Went From Tennis Champ to High-Stakes Miami Litigator \(https://www.law.com/dailybusinessreview/2019/07/26/youve-been-served-how-marko-cerenko-went-from-tennis-champ-to-high-stakes-miami-litigator/\)](https://www.law.com/dailybusinessreview/2019/07/26/youve-been-served-how-marko-cerenko-went-from-tennis-champ-to-high-stakes-miami-litigator/)

[How a Teenage Scrape With Cops Galvanized Jayne Weintraub's Career as Criminal Defense Lawyer \(https://www.law.com/dailybusinessreview/2018/12/07/how-a-teenage-scrape-with-cops-galvanized-jayne-weintraubs-career-as-criminal-defense-lawyer/\)](https://www.law.com/dailybusinessreview/2018/12/07/how-a-teenage-scrape-with-cops-galvanized-jayne-weintraubs-career-as-criminal-defense-lawyer/)

f SHARE    t SHARE

**Raychel Lean**

[\( https://www.law.com/dailybusinessreview/author/profile/Raychel-Lean/\)](https://www.law.com/dailybusinessreview/author/profile/Raychel-Lean/)

Raychel Lean reports on South Florida litigation for the Daily Business Review. Send an email to rlean@alm.com, or follow her on Twitter via @raychellean.

More from this author → [\(https://www.law.com/dailybusinessreview/author/profile/Raychel-Lean/\)](https://www.law.com/dailybusinessreview/author/profile/Raychel-Lean/)

**Dig Deeper**

- [Business Torts \(/topics/business-torts/\)](/topics/business-torts/)
- [Commercial Litigation \(/topics/commercial-litigation/\)](/topics/commercial-litigation/)
- [Immigration Law \(/topics/immigration-law/\)](/topics/immigration-law/)
- [Litigators \(/topics/litigators/\)](/topics/litigators/)

**Recommended Stories**

**[Leslie Kroeger Calls on a Career of Criminal and Civil Work to Advocate](https://www.law.com/dailybusinessreview/2019/08/23/i-was-gone-miami-lawyer-left-a-strict-religious-group-to-start-a-new-life/)**

**Think Lean Daily Message**

" In the client's mind, reliability means: the right outcome, within a range of circumstances, to be jointly pre-defined; on budget, which inc... "

Learn More (/lean-adviser/static/lean-adviser/?cmp=LARMLDC)

**Featured Firms**

**Law Offices of Mark E. Salon**  
2 OLIVER ST #608

**for Consumer Protections**  
**(<https://www.law.com/dailybusinessreview/2019/07/19/leslie-kroeger-calls-on-a-career-of-criminal-and-civil-work-to-advocate-for-consumer-protections/>)**

ZACH SCHLEIN (/AUTHOR/PROFILE/ZACH-SCHLEIN/) | JULY 19, 2019

The Cohen Milstein partner brings to her new role as president of the Florida Justice Association her experience as a prosecutor, defense counsel and plaintiffs lawyer.

BOSTON, MA 02109  
857-444-6468 [www.marksalomone.com](http://www.marksalomone.com)

**Gary Martin Hays & Associates**

235 PEACHTREE ST NE #400  
ATLANTA, GA 30303  
800-898-4297 [www.garymartinhays.com](http://www.garymartinhays.com)

**Smith & Hassler**

225 N LOOP W #525  
HOUSTON, TX 77008  
(877) 777-1529 [www.smithandhassler.com](http://www.smithandhassler.com)

Presented by Big

**You've Been Served: How Marko Cerenko Went From Tennis Champ to High-Stakes Miami Litigator**  
**(<https://www.law.com/dailybusinessreview/2019/07/26/youve-been-served-how-marko-cerenko-went-from-tennis-champ-to-high-stakes-miami-litigator/>)**

RAYCHEL LEAN (/AUTHOR/PROFILE/RAYCHEL-LEAN/) | JULY 26, 2019

Marko F. Cerenko of Kluger, Kaplan, Silverman, Katzen & Levine ranked among the top players in the U.S., before finding a new way—through litigation—to satisfy his appetite for competition.

**'I'm Not Going to Hide Who I am': Attorney John 'Jack' Lord Jr. Champions LGBTQ Rights**  
**(<https://www.law.com/dailybusinessreview/2019/08/09/im-not-going-to-hide-who-i-am-attorney-john-jack-lord-jr-champions-lgbtq-rights/>)**

RAYCHEL LEAN (/AUTHOR/PROFILE/RAYCHEL-LEAN/) | AUGUST 09, 2019

When John "Jack" Lord Jr. joined Foley & Lardner almost 25 years ago, marriage equality benefits didn't exist for employees. Because, well, neither...

## More from ALM

- CLE Center
- Legal Compass
- Events
- Webcasts
- Lawjobs
- Professional Announcements

### Premium Subscription

With this subscription you will receive unlimited access to high quality, online, on-demand premium content from well-respected faculty in the legal industry. This is perfect for attorneys licensed in multiple jurisdictions or for attorneys that have fulfilled their CLE requirement but need to access resourceful information for their practice areas.

### Team Accounts

Our Team Account subscription service is for legal teams of four or more attorneys. Each attorney is granted unlimited access to high quality, on-demand premium content from well-respected faculty in the legal industry along with administrative access to easily manage CLE for the entire team.

[View Now \(http://clecenter.com/CleForFirm/Default.aspx\)](http://clecenter.com/CleForFirm/Default.aspx)

### Bundle Subscriptions

Gain access to some of the most knowledgeable and experienced attorneys with our 2 bundle options! Our Compliance bundles are curated CLE Counselors and include current legal topic and challenges within the industry. Our second option allows you to build your bundle and strategically select the content that pertains to your needs. Both options are priced the same.

[View Now \(http://clecenter.com/Default.aspx\)](http://clecenter.com/Default.aspx)

View Now  
(http://clecenter.com/Program/Premium.aspx)

[CLE Center → \(http://clecenter.com\)](http://clecenter.com)

ALM Legal Publication Newsletters

# Sign Up Today and Never Miss Another Story.

Subscribe Now

As part of your digital membership, you can sign up for an unlimited number of a wide range of complimentary newsletters. Visit your [My Account \(https://store.law.com/Registration/myAccount.aspx?promoCode=FLM#/EmailPref\)](https://store.law.com/Registration/myAccount.aspx?promoCode=FLM#/EmailPref) page to make your selections. Get the timely legal news and critical analysis you cannot afford to miss. Tailored just for you. In your inbox. Every day.

<https://store.law.com/Registration/promoCode=FLM#/EmailPref>  
[Privacy Policy \(https://www.alm.com/privacy-policy-new/\)](https://www.alm.com/privacy-policy-new/)

.(.)

**FOLLOW US**

<https://www.facebook.com/LawdotcomALM/>

<https://twitter.com/lawdotcom>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/law-com/>

<http://feeds.feedblitz.com/law/legal-news/>

**Publications**

**Law Topics**

**Rankings**

**More**

**Law.com**

- [The American Lawyer \(/americanlawyer/\)](#)
- [Corporate Counsel \(/corpcounsel/\)](#)
- [National Law Journal \(/nationallawjournal/\)](#)
- [New York Law Journal \(/newyorklawjournal/\)](#)
- [New Jersey Law Journal \(/njlawjournal/\)](#)
- [The Recorder \(/therecorder/\)](#)
- [More Publications > \(/publications/\)](#)

- [Litigation \(/topics/litigation/\)](#)
- [Deals and Transactions \(/topics/deals-and-transactions/\)](#)
- [Law Firm Management \(/topics/law-firm-management/\)](#)
- [Legal Practice Management \(/topics/legal-practice-management/\)](#)
- [Cybersecurity \(/topics/cybersecurity/\)](#)
- [Intellectual Property \(/topics/intellectual-property/\)](#)
- [More Law Topics > \(/topics/\)](#)

- [Am Law 100 \(/americanlawyer/rankings/the-2019-am-law-100/\)](#)
- [Am Law 200 \(/americanlawyer/rankings/the-2018-am-law-200--the-american-lawyer/\)](#)
- [Global 100 \(/americanlawyer/rankings/global-100/\)](#)
- [National Law Journal 500 \(/nationallawjournal/rankings/the-nlj-500/\)](#)
- [Pro Bono Scorecard \(/americanlawyer/rankings/pro-bono/\)](#)
- [The A-List \(/americanlawyer/rankings/a-list/\)](#)
- [More Rankings > \(/rankings/\)](#)

- [Events \(/events/\)](#)
- [Legal Compass \(/https://www.alm.com/intelligence/solutions-we-provide/business-of-law-solutions/legal-compass/\)](#)
- [Editorial Calendar \(/editorial-calendar/\)](#)
- [Briefings \(/static/briefings/\)](#)
- [Legal Dictionary \(/https://dictionary.law.com/\)](#)
- [Lawjobs.com \(http://lawjobs.com/\)](#)
- [Law Firms \(/law-firms/\)](#)
- [Law Schools \(/topics/legal-education/\)](#)

- [About Us \(/static/about-us/\)](#)
- [Contact Us \(/static/contact-us/\)](#)
- [Site Map \(/sitemap/\)](#)
- [Advertise With Us \(/static/advertise-with-us/\)](#)
- [Customer Support \(/https://www.alm.com/customer-support/\)](#)
- [Terms of Service \(/https://www.alm.com/terms-of-service/\)](#)
- [FAQ \(/sites/almstaff/2017/10/20/faq-asked-questions/\)](#)
- [Privacy Policy \(/https://www.alm.com/privacy-policy-new/\)](#)

Copyright © 2019 ALM Media Properties, LLC. All Rights Reserved.