

PERSONAL & PRACTICE:

# Faegre Baker Daniels Attorney Profiles

## Abi Butler

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OFFICE: Fort Wayne



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### PERSONAL:

#### WHAT IS YOUR IDEA OF PERFECT HAPPINESS?

- ▶ I love being active and being outdoors. That is when I'm happiest. I enjoy hiking, gardening, running and taking my dog for walks.

#### WHICH LIVING PERSON DO YOU MOST ADMIRE?

- ▶ My mom. She stayed home to take care of my siblings and me, and she had cancer when we were young. I look back now and think about how hard it must have been to keep everything together—but she did it. When I was in college and needed a poodle skirt for my sorority's production of *Grease*, she was determined to make it even though she was sick from chemotherapy treatments at the time.

#### WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST EXTRAVAGANCE?

- ▶ Having my house cleaned and having someone else mow the grass. As my career progressed, I started feeling like I couldn't balance everything. Others in the firm convinced me not to feel bad about that, and to hire someone to take care of those things for me.

#### WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE JOURNEY?

- ▶ About a year and a half ago, my husband and I went out to Yosemite and hiked the Half Dome, an 18-mile round trip in one day. We saw everything imaginable: waterfalls, desert areas, a bear. It was amazing.

#### WHO OR WHAT IS THE GREATEST LOVE OF YOUR LIFE?

- ▶ My husband and my children, who are 11, eight and four.

#### WHICH TALENT WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE?

- ▶ I have always wanted to learn to play the fiddle. I play the piano and have played the flute, but I've always wanted to learn the country fiddle.

#### IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING ABOUT YOURSELF, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

- ▶ I would like to be more patient. I rush things I know I shouldn't.

#### WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT?

- ▶ Being able to craft a career that keeps me very satisfied but still being able to spend time with my kids. I've been on a reduced-hour schedule since my oldest child was born and have managed to navigate through becoming a partner, being the Fort Wayne office hiring partner and now being the Fort Wayne office leader.

#### WHAT IS YOUR MOST TREASURED POSSESSION?

- ▶ My home.

#### WHAT DO YOU MOST VALUE IN YOUR FRIENDS?

- ▶ Loyalty.

#### WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE HERO OR HEROINE OF FICTION?

- ▶ Scarlett O'Hara.

#### WHAT IS IT THAT YOU MOST DISLIKE?

- ▶ The failure to follow through. It drives me crazy.

## PRACTICE:

### WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO PRACTICE LAW?

- ▶ I've wanted to be a lawyer since fourth grade. I was in honors classes at the time and we had a debate—I fell in love with the whole process of making an argument, and I thought, "I want to do this for a living." That experience shaped my practice because I knew I wanted to be a litigator.

### WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST CLIENT ACHIEVEMENT?

- ▶ Maintaining a personal friendship with clients. I always thought it would be easy to work with someone who is a friend, but it has been difficult at times. You have to be able to separate the personal from the professional, and I think I've been able to achieve that balance so far.

### IN WHAT AREA WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN MORE OR IMPROVE?

- ▶ I would like more trial experience. My clients often don't want to undergo the risk and time demands of trial. Even in cases where I've felt certain we could win, they choose to settle.

### WHICH OF YOUR COLLEAGUES DO YOU MOST ADMIRE?

- ▶ Tom Stayton. He is retired now, but he taught me so much, and was so patient.

### WHAT DO YOU MOST ENJOY ABOUT WORKING AT FAEGRE BAKER DANIELS?

- ▶ The people.

### WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU COULD CHANGE ABOUT THE LEGAL INDUSTRY?

- ▶ The negative perception and reputation lawyers generally have. Often when I tell new acquaintances I'm a lawyer, they're intimidated or afraid to talk to me.

### WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST CHALLENGING ABOUT YOUR AREA OF FOCUS?

- ▶ Overnight travel is hard on my family.

### WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST REWARDING ABOUT YOUR AREA OF FOCUS?

- ▶ That there's almost always a clear winner and loser in litigation. I like that at the end of the day you walk away and know where you stand.

### HOW HAS YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON LAW CHANGED OVER THE YEARS?

- ▶ When I first began, I would really react strongly to letters from opposing counsel or other things that seemed nasty—they really upset me, and I would take them personally. As I've seen more, experienced more and gotten more perspective, those things don't get to me in the same way. It takes a lot more to get me hot under the collar.

### WHAT IS THE BIGGEST LESSON YOU'VE LEARNED?

- ▶ Not to take things personally. When someone takes a position you think is outrageous or contrary to your clients, it's not personal. They are doing their job and advocating for their clients.

In management, I am learning not to take others' frustration or anger over a firm decision as a personal attack.

### IF YOU COULD CHANGE YOUR AREA OF FOCUS, WHAT WOULD YOU SWITCH TO AND WHY?

- ▶ This is hard because I love litigation. I think labor and employment would be interesting. I've done a couple of cases in that area and they were so often emotionally driven versus fact driven.

### WHAT IS THE NEXT BIG PROJECT YOU'D LIKE TO TACKLE?

- ▶ I am carrying around a huge folder of things I want to read—magazines that come across my desk, articles, case opinions, etc. I put things in my briefcase and think I will read them at home tonight, at a baseball game or on a plane, etc., but I never seem to get to them!