

PERSONAL & PRACTICE:

# Faegre Baker Daniels Attorney Profiles

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### PERSONAL:

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

- ▶ I think the idea of “perfect happiness” is essentially illusive and is always evolving. It’s about making the best of whatever situation you’re in and striving for contentment with people around you who care for you, and vice versa.

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

- ▶ There are so many people who have done so many extraordinary things for the world and the people in it – some you hear about and some you don’t. It’s the unsung heroes of the world, the people who help others because it feels right and because they can, not because they’re going to get recognized, that I most admire.

#### WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST EXTRAVAGANCE?

- ▶ Aviator, the horse I owned for 15 years. He was a fabulous partner. I started riding at age 48. We did competitive show-jumping for three years, with him tolerating and teaching me all the time. After we retired from competition due to an injury to him, we joined the Carver County Mounted Posse to do something together for the community. I have been a volunteer Deputy Sheriff there for almost 12 years. As part of those responsibilities, we did search and rescue, security work (such as for President Bush) and were trained for the Republican National Convention in St. Paul. But we also did National Night Out, city and park patrols, and many other activities that brought us into contact with the public, especially children—whom he loved. Our time together was a most unexpected and irreplaceable joy; he was a big horse with an even bigger heart.

#### WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE JOURNEY?

- ▶ It’s the one I’m on, and I’m not done yet. Throughout my life I’ve been fortunate enough to have had, and continue to have, an amazing set of experiences that I could never have predicted. These life experiences occurred because of other people and opportunities. My journey remains the composite of these experiences and the ones yet to be.

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

- ▶ My wife, my kids and my extended family. I’m a people person, and those are my people!

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

- ▶ I’d like to sing well. My wife and actor son have phenomenal voices and I’d at least like to avoid embarrassing them.

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

- ▶ To be a better listener; to slow down my mental process, pay attention and really listen to people – all people.

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

- ▶ My military service. Three years of active duty in the U.S. Navy and two deployments to Vietnam--after college and before law school--changed me. My service exposed me to a very different world, and to people committed to this country who put themselves in harm’s way without the support of society. I had various leadership responsibilities (such as being responsible for operating the ship as officer of the deck in combat, being in charge of two divisions, and serving as Ship’s Legal Officer)—all before turning 25.

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

- ▶ I value candor, humor, practical intelligence, loyalty and a sense of adventure. People who stand by their principles and are not afraid of a good debate, but welcome the differences in backgrounds and perspectives.

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

- ▶ Indiana Jones. He’s a multi-faceted character: he’s a teacher and a problem solver, he tries to do what’s right, and he experiences personal adventure through his actions and creative innovation.

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

- ▶ Raging egos – when someone attempts to demonstrate their supposed superiority over anyone else by sheer ego and arrogance.

## PRACTICE:

### WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO PRACTICE LAW?

- ▶ Primarily, the idea came from an experience with a constitutional law professor I had in college, who eventually became my advisor and friend. He was the type of professor who really made you think, who challenged you to analyze issues in layers, who showed how the law could be used to do good. And of course, there were the Perry Masons of television who showed up and saved the day and demonstrated you could really make a difference as a lawyer.

### WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST CLIENT ACHIEVEMENT?

- ▶ I'm still working toward it, I hope. I've been fortunate to have some successes and recognitions, but am the first to admit I have benefited from the advice and assistance of others. More importantly, it's not about what I think; it's whether my clients think they had a good outcome.

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

- ▶ My practice spans many substantive and geographic areas, so I'm always learning something new—in tax and in other disciplines, so that gives me a great platform to learn continuously.

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

- ▶ There are so many talented, smart, experienced lawyers in this firm and I'm constantly amazed at what they do and what they know. I admire all of them. If we didn't have the people we have here it wouldn't be as rewarding, stimulating and fun place to work.

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

- ▶ The collegiality. I enjoy working where people honestly come together and share knowledge and experiences to achieve the best outcome. Through my practice, I get exposed to basically every group and office and I love that diversity of experiences as well as the unpredictability of what can happen throughout my day.

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

- ▶ I wish we could do more as lawyers to help real people, less fortunate people, who can benefit from our knowledge, learning and experience. As an industry, I wish there was more focus on helping people without worrying about the money. We are "counselors" as well as lawyers.

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

- ▶ International tax is like a thousand piece puzzle, without knowing the shape or picture to be constructed. That's the challenging part. The rewarding part is that I have the ability to choose which puzzle pieces (which rules and precepts) to use based on what is relevant to that particular client's situation. There's no single way the puzzle has to look when finished.

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

- ▶ The world has gotten quite a bit more complicated legally (and in almost every other way), and we have moved some significant distance from principled legislation and legitimate efforts at legislative compromise, to political stalemate, brinkmanship, competition and short term focus. This does not bode well for future generations. We need to think – and act – for the future, now, when we have the opportunity to make changes that can influence, prevent or at least minimize adverse outcomes that are likely due to inaction today. Better tax and fiscal policy are key parts of these required changes.

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

- ▶ That I don't know everything. I learn something new every day, from my own research, from my colleagues, from my teaching and above all from my clients.

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

- ▶ I wouldn't change it. I really love what I do because it allows me to be creative and to be involved in so many different practice areas and client fact patterns.

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

- ▶ Teaching – it's in my DNA. I've been a teacher for many years, in many diverse areas (like skiing, sailing, swimming, search and rescue, etc.) in addition to tax. I enjoy using my knowledge and experience to enhance the knowledge of other people. I have also enjoyed my Pro Bono work, and I plan to do more of that in the future.