

PERSONAL & PRACTICE:

# Faegre Baker Daniels Attorney Profiles

## Chuck Knapp

INTERVIEW DATE: July 18, 2017

OFFICE: Minneapolis



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### PERSONAL:

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

- ▶ Sitting around the kitchen table with my wife and kids and having a good conversation. Usually facilitated by dinner, a board game or working on some project together.

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

- ▶ The people I most admire are friends and relatives whom no one reading this will know, but who regularly inspire me with the wonderful things they do on a daily basis to make their world a better place.

#### WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST EXTRAVAGANCE?

- ▶ I love traveling and discovering new things, so if there is any extravagance in my life, it would be the money I spend associated with taking vacations.

#### WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE JOURNEY?

- ▶ I've been to over 20 U.S. National Parks, and countless historic sites. We have built family vacations around visiting national parks, and will be visiting Acadia National Park for the first time in a couple of weeks. We've been to a lot of great places, but my favorite has been our stay at Many Glacier Lodge in Glacier National Park in Montana's Rocky Mountains. On one hike there, we found ourselves on the other side of a stream from a mother grizzly bear and her cubs. Luckily, they were more interested in the berries on their side of the stream than us!

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

- ▶ My wife of 26 years. We met in law school, where she always tested better than me – not that I'm bitter about that. She married me anyway, and we have absolutely no interest in each other's practices (she's an in-house lawyer and I'm an employment litigator).

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

- ▶ I love music and wish I had the talent to pick up any musical instrument and play it well.

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

- ▶ I would have a little more patience and would slow down a bit – it's been a lifelong pursuit.

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

- ▶ My kids. I have four children (two in college and two in high school) and I am very proud of each of them.

#### WHAT IS YOUR MOST TREASURED POSSESSION?

- ▶ We have a lake cabin in Wisconsin that we try to get to pretty regularly on the weekends. Twins great Kirby Puckett and author Vince Flynn both had cabins on our lake before their untimely deaths, and we occasionally hang out with Twin City TV personalities Frank & Amelia.

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

- ▶ Honesty.

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

- ▶ Atticus Finch (predictable, but true).

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

- ▶ Hypocrisy.

## PRACTICE:

### WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO PRACTICE LAW?

- ▶ As the youngest of ten kids, I had the opportunity to learn from the career choices of nine siblings and eight in-laws. I have two brothers who are lawyers and a brother-in-law who is now an Eighth Circuit judge. I saw what they were doing in their careers and it looked like fun and interesting work. I also knew that, whatever I did, I wanted to make a difference in society, and being a lawyer allows me to do that.

### WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST CLIENT ACHIEVEMENT?

- ▶ A national manufacturing company hired our firm back in the 1990s, when I was a young associate, to represent them in a one-off employment dispute. We impressed them so much that they asked us to be their national counsel. They turned into a great, long-standing client for the firm. The in-house attorney there and I really “grew up” together in our professional development. We’ve helped her succeed, and she’s returned that favor by advocating for constantly expanding relationships with our firm. It’s been so rewarding to have a 20+ year relationship with the same client.

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

- ▶ I wish I had more opportunities to get trial experience and get in front of a jury. I could always use more experience in that area.

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

- ▶ I would have to pick two. John French was a former partner in the Minneapolis Business Litigation practice. He was a highly respected litigator in the Twin Cities and beyond. I was able to work with him once, and was amazed at how everyone (including the Chief Judge of the U.S. District Court) deferred to him when he entered the courtroom.

As for current colleagues, Mike Giudicessi has built a thriving practice in Des Moines and developed (and continues to sustain) a number of large institutional clients of the firm. I think his success is attributable to the fact that he’s an outstanding legal talent, a focused business developer and an all-around good guy. In addition to all that, however, he has built a tremendous team of lawyers in our Des Moines employment group.

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

- ▶ I love the work opportunities I have here. The cases are challenging and interesting. Perhaps more importantly, I love the people with whom I work. Every time I collaborate with folks from other offices or other groups, I always walk away happier about where I work and what I do. I have the tremendous good fortune of being surrounded by an impressive and talented group of lawyers, paralegals and support staff, all of whom make me look like a far better lawyer than I am.

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

- ▶ I think getting away from the billable hour could bring about a lot of positive change: better trust and loyalty, a more collaborative approach and more ability to make our own decisions about what is the best investment of time (whether for professional development or other reasons).

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

- ▶ Employment litigation was one of the first practices in the legal profession that faced the need to develop AFAs and other creative approaches to remain competitive. It was (and in some respects remains) a challenge, but I think our being forced to address this earlier than other practices gives us the opportunity to share what has worked with our colleagues.

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

- ▶ I have such a wide variety of clients and situations that I work with; it’s always new and interesting. I really love getting to do client visits and touring their facilities – especially when that facility happens to be making my favorite candy bar and I get to be the taste tester!

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

- ▶ As I’ve grown older, I’ve realized that how you tell the story is usually more important than the legal argument. In addition, while I’ve always appreciated the importance of reputation, I think I didn’t fully appreciate how important it is. It is a gift that has been given to us by our predecessors, and it’s something that we need to maintain for our successors. Acting ethically and honestly and taking the high road is critical – judges and opposing counsel have long memories (and loud mouths)!

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

- ▶ I learned from a client years ago the importance of persistence. That “extra step” can lead to multimillion dollar discoveries.

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

- ▶ I wouldn’t. I love employment law.

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

- ▶ There are things we can be doing differently in terms of billing and managing expenses and budgets in litigation. I am hoping to help develop tools internally that we can use to be more efficient and more accountable to clients.