

PERSONAL & PRACTICE:

Faegre Baker Daniels Attorney Profiles

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PERSONAL:

WHAT IS YOUR IDEA OF PERFECT HAPPINESS?

- ▶ Spending time with my wife Lucie in Paris. We just returned from a trip there in June. I especially enjoyed the Rodin museum - it blew me away. And the food is incredible!

WHICH LIVING PERSON DO YOU MOST ADMIRE?

- ▶ My father. I'm just like him, and virtually everything I've learned that matters in life I learned through emulating him and wanting to be like him growing up.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST EXTRAVAGANCE?

- ▶ Traveling. The Paris trip included a stop in London, we also go to New York every spring, and we're already planning our next (likely) European vacation for 2014.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE JOURNEY?

- ▶ Hiking or jogging in or around nature, and outside the Midwest – mountains and oceans in particular.

WHO OR WHAT IS THE GREATEST LOVE OF YOUR LIFE?

- ▶ My wife – not even close. We met at Marquette University Law School and have now been married for 11 years. Lucie is a director in the e-Discovery practice at KPMG, and we love being in Chicago.

WHICH TALENT WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE?

- ▶ I'd like to be able to hit a golf ball like Phil Mickelson.

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

- ▶ I would knock 20 minutes (or one minute) off my best half-marathon time. I recently missed the two-hour mark by less than a minute, and that was frustrating.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT?

- ▶ Convincing my wife to marry me, followed closely by a number of milestones in my professional career: passing bar exams, landing a job, making partner, etc.

WHAT IS YOUR MOST TREASURED POSSESSION?

- ▶ My BlackBerry, unfortunately.

WHAT DO YOU MOST VALUE IN YOUR FRIENDS?

- ▶ A sense of humor. If you have that trait, it cuts across everything else and makes for a better, easier and deeper friendship.

WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE HERO OR HEROINE OF FICTION?

- ▶ I don't read much fiction. One of my favorite non-fiction books is *The Devil in the White City*, and I'm a sucker for any early 20th century Mafia books – I just finished a biography of Jack McGurn, one of Capone's enforcers.

WHAT IS IT THAT YOU MOST DISLIKE?

- ▶ Pretentiousness.

PRACTICE:

WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO PRACTICE LAW?

- ▶ I've always had an interest in the law since very early on. One of my uncles with whom I spent a fair amount of time in my formative years is a Marquette lawyer, as am I. The idea of practicing law was always kicking around in the back of my mind, but in college I majored in broadcast journalism and thought I was going to be an anchor on Sports Center. I took LSAT at the end of college when I realized I wasn't going to be on TV. And here I am!

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST CLIENT ACHIEVEMENT?

- ▶ The I-641 highway trial. I was lead counsel in a contentious construction contract dispute between our clients - a contractor and the owner of the company - and the state department of transportation. The case involved the construction of a public highway near Terre Haute, Indiana. There was a lot at stake for both the corporate and individual clients, and the individual stood to lose multiple millions of dollars personally if the case did not go our way. During settlement negotiations we demanded \$5 million, and the state offered a hypothetical amount in the five-figures. At that moment, I knew we were going to trial. After hearing all of the evidence and arguments, the judge entered an award of \$4.1 million in our favor. This ended a stressful time for the client and his family on a positive note, and I won't forget it any time soon.

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

- ▶ Infrastructure financing and construction. I already do work in this area, but there's always something new to learn. It's also a critical need for our communities, and I'd like to be part of those solutions.

WHICH OF YOUR COLLEAGUES DO YOU MOST ADMIRE?

- ▶ There are many people I admire in the firm. Amie Peele Carter was my first mentor at the firm, and I will be forever indebted to her for her guidance. I also must mention my practice leader, Mark Voigtmann. He has been an informal and formal mentor to me in developing my practice. He is a great resource, and I've emulated him in a lot of ways as I continue to establish and develop my practice.

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

- ▶ I enjoy the challenging and interesting projects I work on every day, and the opportunity to work with exceptional colleagues.

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

- ▶ In a perfect world, it would be nice to make things more efficient. More efficiency in resolving disputes and getting deals done faster and cheaper with no loss in quality should always be the goals.

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

- ▶ Meeting all the different demands on my time is very challenging. Balancing client demands, court deadlines and other firm obligations, all while trying to have a personal life is the biggest challenge of my work.

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

- ▶ The most rewarding aspect of my practice is working on construction projects where we are able to help the client find a solution and make sure the project gets done on time and under budget.

HOW HAS YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON LAW CHANGED OVER THE YEARS?

- ▶ It's very rarely about the law, and at the outset I thought that was the only issue. We are business counselors, and the problem is almost never solved by simply giving the "correct" legal answer. We have to know our clients' business, know the law and provide the best advice for the circumstance. This is, of course, far more challenging and rewarding than simply finding the "correct" legal answer.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST LESSON YOU'VE LEARNED?

- ▶ You need to focus on the practical solution for the client, which may not always be the most logical legal solution. A lot of what I do is consult with construction companies, public entities or real estate owners who have construction needs. Typically, we're trying to avoid a major delay or problem on a particular project, and often the solution is not a legal one. As a young lawyer, you tend to think there is a wrong answer and a right answer, and if you pick the right answer legally, you win. But that's not how most of our work gets done every day.

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

- ▶ Nothing comes to mind. I think I'm stuck being a construction lawyer - I like the people in the industry and the legal issues in this area.

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

- ▶ Being part of a team that wins a major infrastructure improvement project.