

PERSONAL & PRACTICE:

Faegre Baker Daniels Attorney Profiles

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PERSONAL:

WHICH LIVING PERSON DO YOU MOST ADMIRE?

- ▶ My mother. She is unselfishness personified. She always puts others first and put everything into raising my siblings and me.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST EXTRAVAGANCE?

- ▶ I'd have to say cars and travel. Most people see cars as material items, but I view them as experiences – like travel – because it's the driving of the car that appeals to me, even though I'm told that I'm not very good at it. OK, I like looking at them too. I have a Porsche 911 that I love to drive, and I'm a little obsessed with all things Porsche. In my earlier years as an associate, I lived in an apartment with a barely working kitchen and almost no furniture, and I lived off McDonald's Dollar Menu. But I did have a (very used) Porsche.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE JOURNEY?

- ▶ I took a trip to Europe with five of my friends that included a stop in the Greek Islands. We rented cheap ATVs and cruised from one end of each island to the other. No cell phones and, in places, very little sign of civilization. It was the most beautiful place I've ever been.

WHO OR WHAT IS THE GREATEST LOVE OF YOUR LIFE?

- ▶ My father. He was and is to this day my moral compass. He gave me my sense of what is just and fair. Any sense of humor I have is attributed to him – he was hilarious.

WHICH TALENT WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE?

- ▶ Whatever talents make Bruno Mars, Bruno Mars – the dancing, the singing, the swagger – I'd take those.

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

- ▶ I'd like to be more of a morning person and to train my mind to wander a little less. But a wandering mind usually finds creative ideas, so I'm not complaining.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT?

- ▶ Many of my major achievements have been reached with the help of a great team, and while I'm very proud of them, I'd like to think I haven't seen my greatest achievement yet.

WHAT IS YOUR MOST TREASURED POSSESSION?

- ▶ I have wonderful, lifelong friendships with friends from my youth that I treasure very much. Even though we're all very busy with jobs and families, we still find time to talk and text almost every day.

WHAT DO YOU MOST VALUE IN YOUR FRIENDS?

- ▶ Unconditional loyalty, honesty, trustworthiness and a sense of humor. I'm fortunate to have friends that will tell me if I'm out of bounds or doing something wrong while at the same time looking out for me every step of the way.

WHAT IS IT THAT YOU MOST DISLIKE?

- ▶ Arrogance and a lack of empathy in people. I find it frustrating when people refuse to see things from a different perspective or consider the other side of the story.

PRACTICE:

WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO PRACTICE LAW?

- ▶ Three things really led me to practice law: I've always been extremely competitive, and litigation gives me an outlet for that competitive spirit; the practice of law fits well with my skillset and love of writing; and when I was younger, I liked to do acting and there are definitely opportunities in litigation to make the courtroom a stage of sorts.

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

- ▶ As a litigator, I'll always want to gain more trial experience and learn from the more senior trial lawyers that we have in our product liability group. Good trial lawyers are becoming a rare breed in the practice of law, and even though most cases don't go to trial, at the end of the day the opposing side needs to know they would have a capable adversary if they did.

WHICH OF YOUR COLLEAGUES DO YOU MOST ADMIRE?

- ▶ It's very difficult to pick only one, but if I had to, it would be my biggest mentor, Steve Bennett. He is a brilliant, strategic mastermind. He has the most fascinating brain I've ever encountered (and that goes far beyond his practice of law).

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

- ▶ The people I get to work with every day. It's not too often that the people you work with on a daily basis are also the people you want to grab a drink with outside of work, but for me that's the case.

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

- ▶ The billable hour. The value that our clients gain from our services rarely translates to the amount of time we put into a project. I'm personally glad the industry is shifting to focus more on value and less on time, though I don't envy the firm's leaders who are tasked with shepherding us through that transition. That's a tough gig.

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

- ▶ I practice primarily drug and device litigation, and that requires a lot of statistical and scientific knowledge. Science and math were not my areas of strength in school. I wrestle with those challenges daily, but in the course of doing so, I'm learning to love them.

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

- ▶ In drug and device litigation, there are opportunities at every stage of the case to secure small victories in addition to the major victory at the end, so that feeds my competitive nature and keeps me going.

HOW HAS YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON LAW CHANGED OVER THE YEARS?

- ▶ I've become less cynical about the law than when I first started law school and into beginning my practice.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST LESSON YOU'VE LEARNED?

- ▶ Progressively, I've (painfully) learned humility. I was sorely humbled in my early years of practice, which were some of the hardest years of my life. I made so many mistakes and tried so many of my supervisors' patience. Over time I've been extremely humbled by the intelligence, knowledge and skill of my colleagues, and I've realized my way is not always the best way – other people often have better ideas. And as I remember how I struggled early in my career, I'm amazed by how easy the transition has been for the younger attorneys I work with now. They seem like they were born ready.

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

- ▶ I would go into constitutional law because that area of law answers the ultimate questions on how we conduct ourselves, what we value, and how we organize as a society.