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GEARS OF LAW

December 2014

20 Questions

Each issue we are giving readers a glimpse into the lives and interests of legal professionals through a series of questions and answers (20 to be precise). Each issue will feature a different professional responding to the same 20 questions. This issue’s installment of 20 questions features a local Twin Cities attorney.

- 1. What is your name?** Jim Vedder.
- 2. What is your title/position?** Family law attorney at Moss & Barnett, a professional association.
- 3. What has been your largest success or achievement (academically or professionally)?** My largest success professionally has been receiving a great result after a two week family law trial.
- 4. What is the biggest challenge you have faced in regards to the legal profession and how did you overcome it?** The biggest challenge has been dealing with difficult clients and attorneys. I have overcome it by listening to their concerns and meeting the issues head on.
- 5. Do you live by a motto? If so, what is it?** I do not live by a motto, but if I did it would be Carpe Diem.
- 6. What court case (either past or present) interests you the most? Why?** The Nardini case because it hit on almost every important financial issue in family law cases in Minnesota. One of the seminal cases in the state that should be read by every family law practitioner.

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Finding Space as a Paralegal

By Cristin Finnigan

As we make our way through the paralegal program at NHCC, we are encouraged to find areas of law in which we would enjoy working. We learn where our talents lie and discover opportunities that allow us to develop our skills. We also learn about non-traditional roles in which a paralegal background would fit well. Mike Rowe reminded us recently that following our passions may not be the best advice, and that we may struggle in futility if our dreams just aren’t within sensible reach. I understand his point, but I’m going to (kind of) ignore it, anyway.

I’m an aerospace junkie. If you’ve been in a class with me, you may have heard my space law presentation, seen my Jet Propulsion Laboratory coffee mug, or caught me browsing SpaceX’s website. It’s a passion I’ve had since I was little, but it went dormant for a while when I decided I wanted to try to be a writer and became an English major. I loved all things space, but I just didn’t grasp high-level math, which made physics and chemistry a major frustration. Analysis of language was much easier. Because I equated aerospace with engineering, I gave up... until I started classes at North Hennepin.

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Want to Write for Gears of Law?

If you have something you would like to share for the next newsletter, please contact Nathanael Smith at nathan-aelcsmith@gmail.com

PLSA Food Drive

The Paralegal Student Association would like to thank everyone who participated in the food drive contest vs. Phi Theta Kappa for their contributions.

With your help, we were able to win the food drive contest!

Phi Theta Kapp donated: 227.8 pounds

And the

Paralegal program donated: 394.7 pounds!

One Semester Became 14 Years

By Don Lattimore

Editor's Note: As most of you know, Professor Don Lattimore is retiring at the end of this semester. Before leaving, he accepted our offer to write an article about his experience at NHCC. Although we will miss him greatly, we wish him all the best in the future.

In November 2000, I was asked by the then dean of the business department if I would be interested in teaching a couple of classes for the spring 2001 semester. Since I had never taught before and there was little time to prepare, I was hesitant to say yes but I decided to go for it.

As it turned out, it was a decision that I have never regretted. It has been a great fourteen years. I have enjoyed the students who I have had in my classes and the administrative staff who have kept me organized. Most of all, I have had the privilege of working with a Para-legal faculty that is second to none. My colleagues not only are knowledgeable in the areas they teach but they truly care about the students and work together for the students' benefit. They have a great sense of humor and are just fun to be with at our "work meetings".

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Finding Space as a Paralegal cont.

Through various assignments and comments in passing from professors, I was inspired to look into ways a paralegal could work in aerospace. By studying the foundations of space law for my aforementioned presentation, I stumbled upon the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics Legal Aspects of Aeronautics and Astronautics Technical Committee, of which I am a new member.

The Committee is responsible for conducting research and publishing papers on legal trends in the industry. It does not provide legal advice, as the AIAA has its own in-house counsel, but it monitors legislation and policy, and informs members of any trends and changes that may affect them or the organization as a whole. Again, I am still very new, but I am extremely excited to be a part of this organization, and see where this path may lead.

Some members of the AIAA Legal Aspects Committee will be attending the Galloway Symposium on Critical Issues in Space Law next week in Washington, DC. Speakers at the Symposium will discuss issues such as, "Business Perspective of Legal or Regulatory Barriers to Non-Traditional Commercial Activities in Space," and whether existing domestic and international law is adequate for today's commercial environment. There are several domestic and international laws and treaties in place for the regulation of space activity, some dating back to 1959 (shortly after Russia launched Sputnik). Key questions in the topics at the Symposium is whether these laws need to change, and, if so, how?

As the doors to commercial space activity open further, I was excited to learn that they are not only opening for engineers, designers, and technicians, but people in the legal profession, as well. My passion for aerospace has been reignited, and while it may make Mike Rowe "throw up in his mouth," I'm going to follow it. I (probably) won't be an astronaut, and I definitely won't be an engineer, but I will still get to be a part of something great, if only in a life-long volunteer capacity. There are ways to do what we love, even if our talents lie in a different area than our passions. Now, in our time at NHCC, is the time to explore where we want to be. Let's make the most of it.

Current Events:

- Man breaks law by moving manatee

<http://www.usatoday.com/videos/news/2014/12/04/19892251/>

- California Court strikes down DNA collection Law

<http://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/article4266619.html>

- Fort Lauderdale judge lifts law that restricts feeding homeless

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2014/12/03/after-90-year-old-is-arrested-florida-judge-halts-law-that-restricts-feeding-the-homeless/>

- Supreme Court debates “accompany” law

http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/courts_law/2014/12/02/bde6ae52-7a63-11e4-9a27-6fdb6c12bff8_story.html

- Florida Supreme Court to debate extension of “Stand Your Ground” gun law

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/chi-florida-supreme-court-stand-your-ground-law20141202-story.html>

- UPS involved in pregnancy discrimination case

<http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2014/12/02/in-young-v-ups-supreme-court-to-consider-accommodations-for-pregnant-workers>

- States sue Obama administration on immigration executive order

<http://news.yahoo.com/states-sue-obama-administration-immigration-texas-attorney-general-202020997.html>

- On events surrounding death of Eric Garner and Michael Brown:

http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/08/13/us/ferguson-missouri-town-under-siege-after-police-shooting.html?_r=0

<http://www.cnn.com/2014/12/03/justice/new-york-grand-jury-chokehold/>

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/12/03/police-indictments_n_6264132.html

- Editor's Choice:

<http://www.thebenjaminwatson.com/2014/benjamin-watson-thoughts-ferguson/>

One Semester Became 14 Years Cont.

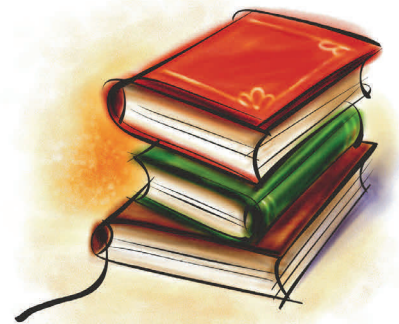
I learned early not to take myself too seriously and to make the classes enjoyable. In one class, I not only had 100% attendance but also had other students show up who were not in the class. That happened when I announced the week before that I was going to bring an Olympic gold medal with me to class (my law partner's son had won it in 2000 for swimming).

I frequently talk about my family including my “grandchildren” and show pictures of them throughout the semester. In one class I showed a YouTube video of the end of a Viking game which showed the Vikings winning on a last second touchdown pass from Brett Favre.

The video showed two empty seats which had been occupied by my daughter and me. We had left two minutes earlier to beat the crowd. I told my students that if they ever think about leaving my class early they should remember the video and realize they may miss something important.

One regret I have is not keeping a list of all the reasons I was given by students on why they either missed class or could not turn in their assignments on time. One of the most unique reasons I was given was from a student who had broken up with her boyfriend and he had taken her assignment with him and would not give it back. I think I gave her credit for originality.

Although I will keep busy with my day job and it will be nice to be at home at night, it is with sadness that I will no longer be at NHCC.



20 Questions Cont'd

7. **What do you like most about Minnesota?** The people.
 8. **What do you think the largest change for the legal profession will be in the future?** Presenting cases electronically.
 9. **Describe yourself using three words:** Practical and hard working.
 10. **What is/was your favorite subject in school?** Economics.
 11. **Who is your biggest role model?** My parents.
 12. **Share something people would be surprised to know about you:** I enjoy science fiction movies.
 13. **What is the number one advice you would give to someone entering the legal profession?** Find balance.
 14. **What is your favorite movie?** Star Wars.
 15. **If you only had one day left to live, what would you do?** Spend it with my kids.
 16. **What is one goal you have for the future?** To improve our family law system.
 17. **What is your favorite book?** Crime and Punishment.
 18. **Which country would you like to visit the most if you were given the chance to?** England.
 19. **If you could give advice to your younger self, what would it be?** Be patient.
 20. **If you could redo your career and start over, with the option of picking another career, would you redo it? Why or why not?** I would be an accountant because I enjoy numbers.
- Bonus Question:**
21. **What area of law do you like the most (criminal law, probate law, contract law, family law, etc.) and why?** Family law, because I can see the direct benefit I am to families.



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Textbook Advertising

In our upcoming issues, we are giving paralegal students the chance to advertise their used textbooks. If you would like to see your book featured in our next issue, please email Nathanael at nathanaelcsmith@gmail.com and provide your name, how you would like to be contacted (for example, by email or phone number), the price for the textbook(s), and the class (or classes) you used the book(s) in.

