12-1-2016

December 2016 E-newsletter Alumnus Spotlight: Neil H. Wasser (J.D.'80)

Office of Communications and Public Relations
University of Georgia School of Law, lawcomm@uga.edu

Recommended Citation
Profiles of Members of the Law School Community. 60.
https://digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/profiles/60

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Archives at Digital Commons @ Georgia Law. It has been accepted for inclusion in Profiles of Members of the Law School Community by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Georgia Law. Please share how you have benefited from this access For more information, please contact tstriepe@uga.edu.
Alumnus Spotlight: Neil H. Wasser (J.D.’80)

Name: Neil H. Wasser
Title: Partner and Chair of the Executive Committee
Employer Name: Constangy, Brooks, Smith & Prophete LLP
Location: Atlanta
Number of years in this position or with this employer: 30+
Georgia Law graduation year: 1980
Other degrees/institution/year: Bachelor's in Psychology / Tulane University / 1977

1. Why did you choose to attend the University of Georgia School of Law?
I grew up in Atlanta and knew I wanted to practice law here, and I knew that Georgia Law would position me well for a career in this city.

2. Who was your favorite Georgia Law professor? Why?
Paul Kurtz and Perry Sentell were two of my favorites. They had very different styles, but both were stimulating, at times funny and always held your attention.

3. What is your most memorable experience from your time at Georgia Law?
Palsgraf Day, when the halls of the law school were lined with railroad tracks and the class was overflowing with students awaiting the show.

4. Where was your favorite place to study during law school?
At my friend Don Samuel’s apartment, where he and I would study along with Frank Brogan. Frank unfortunately died while we were in school and there is a memorial fund set up at Georgia Law in his memory.

5. What was your favorite thing about living in Athens?
It’s a great college town, and a great atmosphere for a law student - Allen’s in Normaltown was one of my favorite places to go.

6. What advice would you give to a current law school student?
Get better grades than I did. Find something you’re passionate about, then use your education to pursue that passion.

7. Please briefly describe your current position at Constangy, Brooks, Smith & Prophete.
For the past ten years I’ve chaired the executive committee at Constangy, but I still enjoy client work, mostly related to OSHA issues.

8. What do you enjoy most about your job? What is the most rewarding aspect?
What I enjoy most is working every day with partners who are inspiring, supportive and incredible lawyers. We’ve got a friendly culture at Constangy that makes it a good place to be. The past few years have been really rewarding – the firm has been in a period of tremendous growth that has come from a commitment to be at the forefront of "top down" diversity. Law360, the National Law Journal and Vault.com have all named us among the top firms in the country for women and minority attorneys.
9. What made you decide to be a lawyer?
It must run in the family, since we have three generations of Georgia Law graduates! Constangy was actually founded by my maternal grandfather, who was one of the youngest-ever Georgia Law grads in 1930. He died while I was still in high school, but it’s special to me that I’ve had the opportunity to help perpetuate something he built. Two of my sons also graduated from UGA Law and are practicing employment law at firms in Atlanta. My third son is currently in law school as well, but he’s a rebel and chose Duke.

10. What do you do to handle the stress of your work? How do you relax after a stressful day?
Sometimes it’s bit of a challenge to leave the stress of work at the office. My stress relief is usually to go to the gym. It also helps having a wife who is a clinical psychologist (she also graduated from the University of Georgia).

11. What do you enjoy doing during your free time? What are your hobbies?
I like to jog, spend time with my four sons and three dogs, and I’m looking forward to the birth of my first grandchild.

12. If you could share an afternoon with anyone, with whom would you choose to spend it?
On a personal level, my grandfather, who I think would be proud to see the growth of the firm he built. On a professional level, Chief Justice Earl Warren, and as a sports fan, Steve Prefontaine.

13. What would you consider your greatest accomplishment in life?
The legacy of my four sons.

14. How do you stay up to date on legal issues and trends?
I read everything I can get my hands on, starting with the publications of our firm, and also things written by other lawyers in firms around the country.

15. What book/resource do you find yourself referencing the most?
Mostly books on organizational structure and management. I’m a big fan of Malcolm Gladwell’s books. The Starfish and the Spider by Ori Brafman and Different: Escaping the Competitive Herd by Youngme Moon.

16. When you look out your office window, what do you see?
In addition to a lot of downtown traffic, I see a growing Atlanta skyline – a hub for business, technology and diversity.