



Career connection:

Will Esser. Belmont Abbey 1995 (political science / business). Notre Dame Law School, 1999. Tenth Circuit law clerk (2000, Santa Fe, New Mexico). Partner at the law firm of Parker Poe Adams & Bernstein LLP (a 200 attorney business law firm with 5 offices in North and South Carolina). Practice in commercial litigation and bankruptcy. Chair of the Firm's Pro Bono Committee, and co-chair of the Financial Services Litigation Team. He and his wife Katie, have three children and currently reside in Charlotte.

1. How did you get started in your career?

My father died when I was a senior at the Abbey. My uncle invited me to take my father's place and work with him as a partner in the family business (selling tennis court equipment). I tried it for a year, but didn't find the intellectual stimulation that I was looking for in sales. I went to law school at Notre Dame and interviewed in Charlotte with several law firms. I had an extra day with no interview lined up towards the end of the week. My tennis coach (Mike Reidy) said "Let me see if I can line something up." He called his friend Marshall Rauch, who called his law firm (Parker Poe) and they set up an interview for me the next day. So my career started with a phone call by Mike Reidy to a friend of his. Abbey connections at its best.

2. Tell us about any special or significant moments in your work career.

About a year ago, I was admitted to the United States Supreme Court in connection with a case that I won before the Fourth Circuit. Although I haven't had the opportunity to argue a case before the Supreme Court, it was still exciting filing briefs with the Court and knowing that they would be reviewed for the Court's consideration of whether to hear the case.

3. What kind of talents & abilities do you need for this position?

A good lawyer needs to know how to listen, but, of equal importance, needs to know when (and how) to tell a client that it is making a bad decision and should chart a different course. Standing up to a client (or telling it a message the client does not want to hear) is a hard lesson for new lawyers to learn, but an essential one. No client is worth risking a lawyer's integrity and character.

4. What advice would you give someone going into this type of work?

See #3.

5. What entry-level positions are available to get started in this career?

I highly recommend that young lawyers interested in litigating consider starting their career with the district attorney or public defender's office. The level of court experience and trial time that they will encounter in these positions is almost impossible to replicate in a private practice. They will be much better trial attorneys after a few years of such experience.

6. What is your favorite part of your job?

I enjoy serving as the Chair of the Firm's Pro Bono Committee. While providing legal services to regular clientele is rewarding in many ways, it is hard to compare with the look of thanks and appreciation from the indigent client whose



life you may have immeasurably improved. When you can look into someone's eyes and shake their hand knowing that because of you they have a place to live or money to buy their first ever car, that is one of the richest rewards that any job could offer.

7. What is your biggest challenge?

My biggest challenge as a lawyer is to take the time to slow down. I'm such a "doer" and want to see things accomplished right away, that I have to remind myself to press the brakes and give time for sufficient reflection on how best to handle the legal problem at hand.

8. What qualities make an ideal candidate for this job?

An ideal candidate to be a lawyer is someone who loves knowledge and is always ready to keep learning. The best lawyers also love problem solving and figuring out ways within the law to achieve a client's goals.

9. Where can a person get the training needed for this job?

Law school to some degree, but mostly through practice. Nothing can substitute for the experience which comes with practice.

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