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Helping People Is the Best Part

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As a teenager, Day Pitney Partner Brian Thompson first listed most of the colleges he wanted to attend by how well their basketball teams had performed in the most recent NCAA Tournament. His passion for sports, especially soccer and basketball, started him on his journey. Brian attended the University of Central Florida, where he set his plan in motion to attend law school and become a lawyer. Although he considered practicing in other areas of the law, he retained a strong interest in trusts and estates largely due to his trusts and estates class at the University of Florida, Levin College of Law.

Trusts and estates law also caught his attention while clerking for the judges of the 15th Judicial Circuit in Palm Beach County, Florida. "I was assigned to the probate court, and it challenged me," Brian says.

"It's very real," Brian says of his trusts and estates law practice. "You can't escape the end-of-life issues. Educating people about the importance of estate planning is an interesting challenge to take on. There is value in getting someone who was previously on the fence on board to allow me the opportunity to do their work."

Brian has seen plenty of examples of where estate planning was not done at all, or done incorrectly, and the impact that can have on people. "My practice consists of preparing people to transition their wealth or their assets to those in their family," he says, adding that there are a variety of planning tools and strategies available to assist people.

Helping people is the best part of his practice, Brian says. Being a good listener is necessary and has helped him navigate the many complicated financial and interpersonal dynamics involved in estate planning.

Frank Barrella, a financial manager at Franklin Capital Management, first met Brian through a client and now refers many of his clients to him—including his own mother-in-law. Brian helped settle her difficult estate with professionalism and knowledge, Frank says. "Brian is straightforward and honest," he adds. "He knows the estate planning side of business."

Practicing trusts and estates law in South Florida, where he grew up, feels right. The population has exploded over the decades, Brian observes, and there is a diverse population with varied levels of estate planning needs.

Brian's mother was a homemaker until she began to help his father when he opened his own electrician business. His parents were the most influential people in his life, he says. He describes his father, who passed away just over a year ago, as "one of the most honest people I've ever met." His mother "demonstrated a lot of patience and quiet fortitude," he adds.

"Having the values they instilled in me guided me to where I am today, because with a legal practice, we're challenged on so many levels," he says.

Ultimately, it was the same passion for sports that led him to Day Pitney. While serving as a board member of a youth soccer league, Brian met an attorney who hired him to practice at his firm. That firm later merged with Day Pitney. He was excited for the change and is quite happy practicing at Day Pitney.

TRUSTS AND ESTATES

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