

LEGAL PERSPECTIVES

3 Questions, 7 Attorneys, 21 Answers

WHAT IS THE MOST CHALLENGING OR INTERESTING PART OF YOUR PROFESSION?



“I have never worked in a law firm. I am a ‘homegrown’ in-house lawyer. I have worked for my company for 29 years – 12 of them as the company’s attorney. So, the most challenging part of my job is trying to be as useful and helpful as I can be without always knowing all of the answers. It is challenging that I can’t just walk to the office next to mine and ask for advice or just run something past another lawyer. As a law department of one, I depend on my outside counsel a lot to assist in areas that I am not familiar with.”

– Debi Dobbins
Vice President and Corporate Counsel
The Heritage Group

“Meeting so many people’s different expectations. ... As an attorney, you’re answering to judges, juries, clients, other attorneys. There’s no clear hierarchy of, ‘This is who you have to satisfy or impress.’ It could be 20 different people with 20 different expectations.”

– Mark Molter, Associate Attorney
Bingham Greenebaum Doll LLP

“Helping business owners get liquidity for their shares while rewarding and incentivizing employees to ‘think like an owner’ is very meaningful to me. I have had the privilege of seeing the impact many successful ESOP (employee stock ownership plan) companies have made in helping their employees create wealth for themselves in a way the employees couldn’t have done on their own. It really is a lot of fun to work with business owners and companies from so many industries all across the country. There is a new challenge every single day.”

– Alex Mounts, Partner
Krieg DeVault

“You’re always learning something new as part of what you do. It’s rare that things get stale or that you’re doing the same thing over and over again.”

– Jim Whitlatch, Partner
Bunger & Robertson

“For me personally, the thing I love the most – it’s the varied projects and transactions I do. I buy and sell businesses, and do financings and help people start companies, etc. It’s the diversity of the issues I deal with. Most of the legal issues I deal with are business issues wrapped in legal problems. It’s dealing with all of those things that I love and that are challenging, but fun.”

– Brad Schwer, Partner-in-Charge
Taft Indianapolis

“Working within the manufacturing industry presents a huge array of issues that may impact business, so it’s both challenging and interesting to consistently learn new things to help guide business partners through issues as they arise.”

– Rachel Hazaray, Assistant General Counsel and Senior Manager of Legal and Corporate Social Responsibility
Subaru of Indiana Automotive, Inc.

“My primary practice area is labor and employment law. That’s an area that is constantly changing, both because of legislation – federal, state, even local sometimes – as well as judicial interpretations. Businesses want consistency. They want predictability so they can plan things. And that can be difficult in this realm. There aren’t that many bright lines. Very little black and white.”

“The most difficult part of my job is probably – first of all, making sure my clients are keeping up with the ever-changing landscape so they can avoid litigation. And when they do face litigation, trying to predict how a judge or a jury might rule on a particular set of facts in order to help them make informed decisions.”

– Suzanne Newcomb, Partner
SmithAmundsen LLC



WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST UNIQUE CASE?

“We handle a wide variety of disputes – from sexual harassment cases with some really salacious facts to some difficult, heartbreaking situations: employees that are struggling with debilitating illnesses or difficult disabilities and trying to balance their rights with the needs of the employer and so forth. Every case is unique.”

“What I like is that our clients are in a wide range of industries. Each business is different . . . being a labor and employment litigator has allowed me to dive into the aviation industry, manufacturing, food processing, commercial construction, banking – all kinds of different areas and learn the unique ins and outs of a wide range of industries.”
– *Newcomb, SmithAmundsen LLC*

“I worked on a large transaction a few years ago where I represented an ESOP, which owned 100% of a company that was selling to a private equity group. The sale was very lucrative for the ESOP participants; however, the U.S. Department of Labor was saying there were problems with the ESOP – which there weren’t. I, along with others, worked with a lobbyist and members of Congress from the states where this company had operations to help resolve the Department of Labor issues. In the end, everything worked out well for the ESOP participants.”

– *Mounts, Krieg DeVault*

“I just represented the state of Indiana in the formation of the Indiana Next Level fund, the \$250 million fund of funds basically – a private equity fund the state has established to invest in private equity in the state of Indiana. That was fun. It wasn’t just me. It was a team of folks.”

– *Schwer, Taft Indianapolis*

“I was fortunate to lead the effort to modify our air permit to gain regulatory approval to greatly expand our plant’s production capacity. It’s so gratifying to be able to help Subaru grow, resulting in a new vehicle produced at our facility, as well as creating job opportunities for a large number of new employees.”

– *Hazaray, Subaru of Indiana Automotive, Inc.*

“I am not a litigator, and I am fortunate that I work for a company that hasn’t been involved in a lot of varied litigation; however, one interesting case involved, unfortunately, 120,000 dead turkeys. It was very interesting to be involved in that case and see some of how the poultry food industry works.”

– *Dobbins, The Heritage Group*



“Here’s one that’s sort of ongoing: I’m representing a farmer in a dispute. We’re pursuing a very novel legal theory for Indiana.”

– *Mark Molter*
Bingham Greenebaum Doll LLP

“I represented a hospital where an individual came to the hospital with his wife and said that she’d been injured falling off of her horse and into some brush. She had to have minor surgery. While she was in surgery, her mother came to the hospital and said, ‘I’ve called the police (and) everybody else (who could potentially help)! Nobody will respond, but my daughter’s husband actually did this to her with a fire poker.’

“Terrible thing there! The hospital staff stopped them before they left, but the daughter insisted she wanted to leave with the husband and told her mother to get lost – that she didn’t want to have anything to do with her mother anymore.”

“The husband and the daughter drove about four or five blocks from the hospital, and he murdered her and killed himself.”

“The question in the case was whether the hospital should be held responsible for allowing them to leave the hospital. That case also went to the Indiana Supreme Court and ultimately, the Indiana Supreme Court held that under those circumstances, the hospital was not responsible for that type of situation.”

– *Whitlatch, Bunger & Robertson*

WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING IF YOU WERE NOT A LAWYER?

“Nothing. Being a lawyer is my second career. I love what I do and would not want to do anything else at this point.”

– *Dobbins, The Heritage Group*

“I’d probably be something in academia – a history professor, a teacher of some sort or even a combination of teacher and (basketball) coach. But probably more likely, I’d want to be a college professor.”

– *Whitlatch, Bunger & Robertson*

“In my fantasy world – we all have a fantasy world, right? – I think I would be a travel writer. I just haven’t found anyone yet willing to pay me to jet off to interesting places, and sit around and reflect upon it! Probably more realistically, I would likely be a high school teacher, like my mom.”

– *Newcomb, SmithAmundsen LLC*

“I’m a JD MBA. I got both degrees – a dual degree – when I graduated from school. If I wasn’t a lawyer, I’d be in a business role in private equity or in a corporate development role within a corporation, or running a business.”

– *Schwer, Taft Indianapolis*

“Like a lot of millennials, I’m a big fan of craft beer. I’d say I’d be working in a brewery. I would hope, anyway!”

– *Molter, Bingham Greenebaum Doll LLP*

WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING IF YOU WERE NOT A LAWYER?

“I’d like to believe I’d be doing something fun and entrepreneurial like owning an adventure tour company somewhere in the Rockies. But to be honest, it’s hard to say because I never really pictured doing anything besides being a lawyer!”

– Rachel Hazaray, Subaru of Indiana Automotive, Inc.



 A photograph of Alex Mounts, a man in a dark suit and blue tie, standing behind a podium. Behind him is a presentation slide titled "ASSOCIATION INVOLVEMENT" with the following content:

- The ESOP Association
- National Center for Employee Ownership
- Ohio Employee Ownership Center
- Employee-Owned S Corporations of America

 The slide also features statistics:

- 17 Trustees represented in ESOP Transactions
- 200+ ESOP conference presentations
- Our ESOP Transactions have ranged from \$1.5M ⇌ \$1.7B
- OVER 103 years of combined experience

“It’s really hard to imagine not being an attorney, but I enjoy teaching and public speaking, so I would say a college professor.”

– Alex Mounts, Krieg DeVault

RESOURCES: Bingham Greenebaum Doll LLP at www.bgdlegal.com | Bunger & Robertson at www.lawbr.com | The Heritage Group at www.thginfo.com | Krieg DeVault www.kriegdevault.com | SmithAmundsen LLC at www.salawus.com | Subaru of Indiana Automotive, Inc. at subaru-sia.wixsite.com/Indiana | Taft at www.taftlaw.com

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www.indianachamber.com
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