



# LAWYER SNAPSHOT



## Alaina King Benford

*Alaina King Benford, who graduated from Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University in 2000, is a commercial litigator and partner at Norton Rose Fulbright's Houston office.*

---

INTERVIEW BY  
**LINDSAY STAFFORD MADER**

---

### **What is the biggest issue the legal profession faces today?**

Legal service providers continue to be challenged with how to best meet the local and increasingly global needs of clients in a manner that adds value to the client, while also taking into account the value of the legal service provided.

### **What was the most unforgettable day or moment in your career?**

I will never forget standing in my office late in the evening three years ago, making phone calls to my husband and my parents to inform them that I had just been elected to partnership at my law firm.

### **What is your best tip for balancing work and leisure?**

Several years ago when my youngest son was four years old, he put his little hands on my face to physically force me to stop typing on my Blackberry and look at him while he talked about his day at school. That taught me to be present and to live in the moment. It doesn't always happen, but I strive to focus on work while I am working and on my family during family time.

### **What is the biggest mistake you have made as a lawyer?**

Worrying too much when work is light and stressing too much when work is busy are the biggest mistakes I have made, and sometimes continue to make, as a lawyer.

### **What would your clients be surprised to learn about you?**

My clients almost always see me dressed in a suit, so they might be surprised to know that I dress casually on the weekends, usually in a T-shirt, jeans, and flip-flops.

### **What is the one tool you find indispensable?**

Hands down, my iPad with 3G-network service. The Fastcase iPad app has helped me quickly find case law during hearings, and the Texas Bar Legal app (which includes the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure) allows me to leave the book in the office.

### **If you weren't practicing law, what would you be doing?**

Assuming this question does not involve a sudden financial windfall, if I was not practicing law, I might work in real estate development.

### **One word of advice for a new lawyer?**

Do excellent legal work, but lift up your head, get out of the office, and engage in life. You will be a better person and a better lawyer for having done so.





# LAWYER SNAPSHOT



## Kevin Bonner

*Kevin Bonner received his law degree from the University of Mississippi School of Law in 2009 and is a commercial litigator with Baird, Crews, Schiller & Whitaker in Temple.*

INTERVIEW BY  
**LINDSAY STAFFORD MADER**

### **What is the biggest issue the legal profession faces today?**

Maintaining our identity as a profession. As we've seen in recent years, continuous adjustments and responses to pressures present the real risk of turning away from our roots as a profession and simply becoming businesses, focused only on the bottom line. I like making money just as much as the next guy, but I think we must remember that our calling as lawyers is much more than profits.

### **What was the most unforgettable day or moment in your career?**

On my second wedding anniversary, I had to travel to New York for a deposition in Rockefeller Center. The deposition was not until the afternoon, so I found some time to run down the street to buy my wife her favorite cupcakes and a small gift. Taking a deposition in Rockefeller Center in my first year of practice was a heady experience, but nothing could beat telling my wife that I went all the way to New York on a private jet to buy her anniversary present.

### **What is your best tip for balancing work and leisure?**

Make it a priority. Because the work we do is important, time away from the office can start to feel more like a burden than it does a vacation. You have to make time for family, friends, and even a little fun. Stick to whatever plans you make—the world won't stop spinning and you might even enjoy it.

### **What is the biggest mistake you have made as a lawyer?**

Not confirming that local counsel in Cleveland had actually scheduled a court reporter and videographer for a deposition. We arrived for the deposition, and I had to scramble to get a reporter and videographer there. It all worked out, and I learned a valuable lesson in the process.

### **What would your clients be surprised to learn about you?**

I honestly have no idea.

### **What is the one tool you find indispensable?**

My iPad. I take it everywhere with me. It has saved me any number of times by allowing me to do research on the fly in court.

### **If you weren't practicing law, what would you be doing?**

I would probably be working in politics.

### **One word of advice for a new lawyer?**

Whether you are in the biggest of firms or you are hanging your own shingle, find someone who is well respected in the area of law you are interested in and learn everything you can from him or her. The lessons that person will teach will be invaluable to your practice.





# LAWYER SNAPSHOT



## Don Richard Lane

*Don Richard Lane, who graduated from the University of Oklahoma College of Law in 1960, is a solo practitioner in Pampa who focuses on wills, trusts, and probate law.*

---

INTERVIEW BY  
**LINDSAY STAFFORD MADER**

---

### **What is the biggest issue the legal profession faces today?**

The issue that has confronted the profession for years: public relations and the perception of the profession.

### **What was the most unforgettable day or moment in your career?**

The day I received a letter, shortly before completing my active duty in the Air Force JAG, from the Honorable Alfred P. Murrah, judge of the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals, asking me to be his law clerk.

### **What is your best tip for balancing work and leisure?**

Never forget that there are other areas in life that are important, and help keep your work in proper perspective.

### **What is the biggest mistake you have made as a lawyer?**

Partnerships.

### **What would your clients be surprised to learn about you?**

When I was a child, I entered an amateur contest and whistled the "Isle of Capri."

### **What is the one tool you find indispensable?**

The one *person* I find indispensable is my administrator, who has been with me for 35 years.

### **If you weren't practicing law, what would you be doing?**

Since I have practiced law for more than 50 years, I think it is a little late to deal in "what ifs."

### **One word of advice for a new lawyer?**

Never forget that you are to serve others to the best of your ability and become a giver of your time and talent to your community.





# L A W Y E R S N A P S H O T



## Juan Pablo “J.P.” Garcia

*Juan Pablo “J.P.” Garcia is a solo attorney with a private law practice in Uvalde. He graduated from Baylor Law School in 2008.*

---

INTERVIEW BY  
**LINDSAY STAFFORD MADER**

---

### **What was the most unforgettable day or moment in your career?**

The moment just before my first jury argument. That was something else.

### **What is your best tip for balancing work and leisure?**

Manage the time you spend on your smartphone. When left unchecked, it can become what separates us from those who care about us the most. At some point, you have to put that thing down and be available (physically and emotionally) for others, especially family.

### **What is the biggest mistake you have made as a lawyer?**

Right out of the gate I struggled to keep up with the demands of practice at the office. Once I made an adjustment, I wished I'd done so sooner.

### **What would your clients be surprised to learn about you?**

Out of high school, I was drafted by the Cincinnati Reds as a pitcher. I'm still a baseball player at heart.

### **What is the one tool you find indispensable?**

My running shoes. Those puppies helped get me through law school (think Bear Trail), and they're still essential today. Sometimes I'll give my old 2006-2007 Nikes a ride. Those bad boys can still get the job done!

### **If you weren't practicing law, what would you be doing?**

Playing or coaching baseball. There's nothing quite like the smell of fresh mowed grass, pine tar, baseball gloves, and the sound a bat and ball make upon contact—heaven on earth.

### **One word of advice for a new lawyer?**

Prepare.

