

Bill KROGER

HOMETOWN: HOUSTON
POSITION: PARTNER IN BAKER BOTTS IN HOUSTON
BOARD MEMBER: DISTRICT 4, PLACE 3 SINCE 2021

INTERVIEW BY **WILL KORN**
PHOTO COURTESY OF **BILL KROGER**



I HAVE ENJOYED BEING PART OF A HIGHLY CAPABLE, FUNCTIONING, DIVERSE BOARD OF DIRECTORS THAT GETS ITS BUSINESS DONE IN A DEMOCRATIC WAY, WHERE ALL OPINIONS ARE LISTENED TO RESPECTFULLY AND CONSIDERED, THE PROCESS IS LED BY COMPETENT LEADERS, AND DISCUSSION IS GOVERNED BY SOUND METHODS SUCH AS ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER. I don't take that for granted anymore in our country. We had distractions during the COVID-19 years, but I'm proud that we are back to a well-functioning body. And I am proud to be a part of that.

OUR BOARD COMPRISES PEOPLE WHO ARE IN ALL STAGES OF THEIR CAREER. Mine is fully formed, and I enjoy giving back to the profession that did so much for me and my family. That being

said, I have enjoyed meeting new people and making new friends.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO ATTEND EVERY MEETING IN PERSON AND PARTICIPATE FULLY. It is probably advisable going in to have one or two goals in mind for what you would like to accomplish on the State Bar Board of Directors.

MOST OF MY WORK HAS BEEN THE QUIET BUT IMPORTANT BUSINESS OF REVIEWING AND APPROVING BUDGETS, AND OTHER FINANCIAL INFORMATION, AND PARTICIPATING IN OVERSIGHT OF ACCOUNTING AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT ISSUES. In my opinion, the State Bar of Texas finances, and books and records, are in good shape and well managed, and I'm proud of that.

I WORKED WITH THE STATE BAR TO DEVELOP A ONE-HOUR ETHICS CLE WITH FORMER U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE JAMES A. BAKER III. He has been my partner for more than 30 years and has probably been the biggest influence on my development as a lawyer, leader, and engaged citizen. He may also be our most outstanding living lawyer in the state of Texas. He is now 93 and as he says, still has "all my marbles." It was a remarkable interview, led by State Bar of Texas Executive Director Trey Apffel, and it is now available to every lawyer in Texas at texasbarcle.com.

BAKER BOTTS HAS A CREED, WRITTEN DURING THE 1910s, THAT HAS GOVERNED THE CONDUCT OF OUR LAWYERS FOR MORE THAN 100 YEARS. I have tried to live up to it. Here it is: "Professional preeminence, excellence of professional services, living fully up to the traditions of the Firm and to the standards set by those who have gone before us, and so conducting ourselves and our work in the minutest details as to reflect credit up on them—this must be our first care—our dominating purpose. If we do not make a dollar, we must so conduct ourselves and discharge the duties and responsibilities undertaken by and imposed upon us that the name 'Baker Botts' will stand throughout the country as a synonym for character, integrity, honesty, promptness, accuracy, resourcefulness, initiative, tact, diplomacy, and ability to produce results. Professional recognition and pecuniary rewards will follow, but they must at all times be incident to and not the ultimate object sought."

MY WIFE, ELIZABETH, AND I HAVE BEEN MARRIED FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS, AND WE ENJOY JUST HANGING OUT TOGETHER AND WITH OUR GROWN CHILDREN. Sometimes we go to one of Houston's many great performing arts events. Or the museums. Or I watch her weed in our gardens. We read a lot, which I think is essential for lawyers. I am on my second reading of *War and Peace*, by Leo Tolstoy, which might be the single best book I have read. **TBJ**