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WORD FOR WORD

WHAT IS YOUR MOST MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE FROM LAW SCHOOL?

AS TOLD TO BETSY GRACA



While attending Vanderbilt Law, I had the privilege of hiking, hunting and biking the Tennessee mountains. One week before our finals—the one and only grade for the semester—I had a biking accident where I shattered my elbow and tore my rotator cuff in a fall caused by a contractor's negligence.

I couldn't hold a pen or type, but managed to get through my finals using a dictation machine. The plus side was twofold: One, I learned to use a dictation machine and, two, after successfully negotiating a claim against the negligent contractor, my passion for personal injury law was born.

YANNI FUNK / FUNK & ASSOCIATES, AUSTIN, PERSONAL INJURY PLAINTIFF



I was in my third year of law school when 9/11 happened. I remember that I was the last person in my class that morning 'cause I'd been watching the news. People were already in class and I'd told the class that the second tower had fallen. Our professor let us go and shortly after that, the dean just dismissed classes for the day.

There were just a lot of us watching the news together and talking about some of the implications of what was happening and what was likely to happen, including what we were going to do legally about terrorists and if we caught them and when. Law students and lawyers just kind of see the world differently and during that tragedy, we were all standing there together, thinking about what our future was going to be in this completely different way than I think other people were.

KRISTAL THOMSON / WILSON, PENNYPACKER & THOMSON, SAN ANTONIO, FAMILY LAW



I think you always remember the first day.

I remember there was a guy—who we called "The Stanford Guy"—and that first day in class, I remember him speaking multiple times in class. I've never been shy but you know, it's the first day and so everyone sort of approaches things with a little trepidation—but not this guy. He led things right off and said a number of things, kind of continued throughout our first semester. We had our first year exams and those came out and as law school developed, this guy spoke less and less. I had kind of thought that he was the smartest guy in the class and he was going to be our number one guy because of how much he offered—and it turned out that he wasn't the number one guy. A lot of the guys who you never heard speak out were the guys who really knew what was going on. It's not how well you speak in class that controls where you end up after law school; it's how well you master the facts of the cases and appreciate the issues that the professors are trying to teach you.

JOHN GARVISH / McKOOL SMITH, AUSTIN, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LITIGATION