

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2020

# OFF DUTY

THE PERSONAL SIDE OF DFW BUSINESS LEADERS

PURSUIITS

## Going the Distance

Haynes and Boone attorney **Jeff Dorrill** is the reigning ultradistance triathlon national champion.

story by **BEN SWANGER**



PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF JEFF DORRILL

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### OFF DUTY

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After all that, he's still pursuing his ultimate goal: a podium finish at a world championship.

In his career, Dorrill has learned how to strategize. "You can't just work hard, you have to work smart," he says. That philosophy has carried over into his athletic pursuits, too. It's exhibited by hard-core training habits, discipline at the dinner table, discerned sleeping patterns, and unwavering determination—all in the effort to become not only an elite athlete, but also a high-performing lawyer and dedicated family man.

In the past two years alone, Dorrill has closed more than 40 high-end hotel acquisitions, upscale multifamily residential developments, and massive distribution centers, worth hundreds of millions of dollars. All the while, he has competed in a whopping 600 races, from his backyard in Dallas to far-away places such as Denmark.

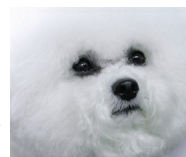
As with all other professional sports, triathlons were put on hold this spring due to COVID-19. But in June, Dorrill returned to work, taking home the first-place finish in the 55-59 age group at the 2020 South Central Region Duathlon (running and cycling) Championship. He has put in the hard work to earn his many triumphs but Dorrill says he considers it all to be a team sport: "There is no way I could achieve what I do without the continuing grace of those in my corner." **D**

AT THE STARTING LINE OF THE IRONMAN 70.3 World Championships in Nice, France, Haynes and Boone attorney Jeff Dorrill stood ready to begin another triathlon—but not before he closed the \$500 million acquisition of a New York City hotel, over the phone, for Irving's Highgate Capital Group. After finding a stranger to take care of his mobile phone, Dorrill's day demanded a 1.2-mile swim, a 56-mile bike ride, and a 13.1-mile run.

He grew up loving sports, but mostly just watched from the bleachers. At the age of 43, after his wife Melisa ran the Chicago Marathon, Dorrill decided it was time to get off the sidelines. "I told myself I was never going to be a spectator again." The 59-year-old father and husband, who is the current ultradistance triathlon national champ in his age group, began his athletic endeavors with half-marathons, but soon found himself on the bike and in the water, too. The transition wasn't easy, and he almost gave up. But after investing in some upgraded equipment, he gave it another go.

Nearly 10 years after his first triathlon, Dorrill now finds himself with too many accolades—and adversities—to recall. He represented Team USA, after earning several first place finishes on the circuit. And, at 55 years old, he scored points at an NCAA Division 1 national championship for the University of Alabama triathlon team, while earning his second master's degree. He has overcome hypothermia and jellyfish stings, recovered from three crashes and concussions, and raced with a dislocated shoulder.

**THAT FACE**  
Bichon Frise Lily Claire was born to be a star.



**DOG TALES**  
Ads for Lily Claire were published in The Canine Chronicle and Dog News.



**MEDIA STAR**  
Brown with Tara Martin Rowell (Lily Claire's agent/handler) and ET reporter Rachel Smith.

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### MY PET

The American Heart Association's chief executive, Nancy Brown, truly has a top dog.

"We've been the proud owners of Bichons Frises, which is the breed of dog that Lily Claire is, for almost 30 years. We went and picked her up—adorable, loving little Lily Claire—and lived up to our commitment to put her on the show circuit. She became a champion within a couple of weekends and a grand champion within another couple weekends. We then hired a professional agent and handler, who manages her show career, and she has done really well. Lily has been in a total of 102 dog shows. Last year, she finished as the No. 1 Bichon in the country. So far this year, she's the No. 1 female Bichon and the No. 2 Bichon overall in the country—although all dog shows have been canceled for the foreseeable future. ... For all of us as CEOs, it's interesting and important to have hobbies. I love my animals. I love exercising. I love competition. I love meeting new people and learning new things. Showing Lily Claire has brought all of that together for me."

—as told to Kelsey J. Vanderschoot

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF NANCY BROWN

