HB Connections



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HB CONNECTIONS

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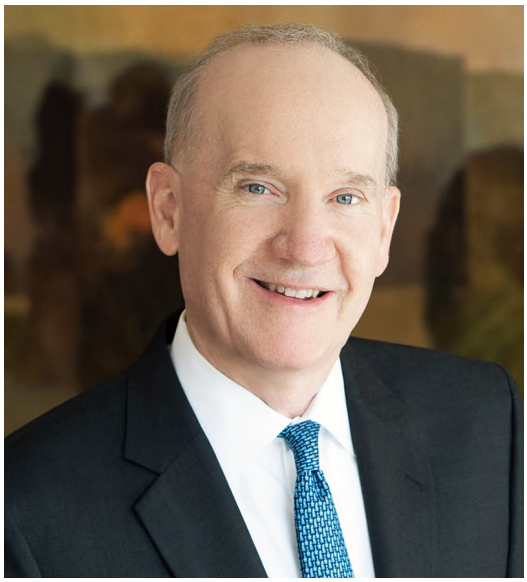
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WELCOME



“Our alumni remain an important part of the Haynes Boone community, and the paths they continue to forge reflect the strength and reach of that connection.”

TAYLOR WILSON
CHAIR AND FIRMWIDE MANAGING PARTNER
DALLAS

Welcome to the latest edition of *HB Connections*. Our alumni community continues to grow and evolve, with members building meaningful careers, pursuing new opportunities and making a difference in their professions and communities.

In this issue, we share stories that reflect the many directions a career can take — and the relationships, experiences and shared history that continue to connect our alumni to one another and to Haynes Boone. We hope you enjoy catching up with familiar faces and discovering where their journeys have taken them.

ALUMNI COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS



BARRY BUCHMAN



TIFFANY FERRIS

We’re pleased to bring you another edition of *HB Connections* and to celebrate the achievements, experiences and perspectives of our alumni community. We encourage you to stay connected by joining the Haynes Boone **Alumni Group** on LinkedIn and sharing your news and milestones with us for future editions.



ANN WHITLEY WOOD

Haynes Boone alum Ann Whitley Wood took an unconventional path from practicing law to entrepreneurship to nonprofit fundraising. Today, she is helping shape the future of one of Dallas' most beloved public spaces — and drawing every day on lessons she learned at the firm.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF ADVOCACY

In 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic upended daily life across Dallas, Ann Whitley Wood was working on a challenge of her own: completing a capital campaign for Friends of the Katy Trail.

Wood had only recently made the transition into professional fundraising. She had practiced appellate law, spent years raising three children, built a home-based consignment business and taken a development position at Klyde Warren Park. Fundraising was, in some respects, still an experiment.

Then the campaign surpassed its goal.

"When we went over the campaign goal during that difficult year, I realized how much I enjoyed trying to meet a challenge that would make a positive change for Dallas," Wood said.

It was a realization that helped turn an unconventional career transition into a new career.

A CAREER THAT DID NOT FOLLOW A STRAIGHT LINE

Wood stopped practicing law in 2000 to focus on her three children. The timing coincided with the early days of eBay and online selling, and what began as a hobby gradually developed into a consignment business she operated from home for many years.

She also volunteered with schools and community organizations. Again and again, she found herself choosing the fundraising assignments.

As her children grew older and the consignment business began to change, Wood decided to see whether that interest could become a profession. She joined Klyde Warren Park in a development role — starting at what she describes as a modest "Manager" level — before moving about a year later to Friends of the Katy Trail to lead a capital campaign that had stalled.

Her path may appear circuitous on paper. To Wood, however, the stages connect. The practice of law taught her to advocate and communicate. Volunteer work showed her that she enjoyed fundraising. And the willingness to start over at a different level gave her the opportunity to develop a new professional skill set.

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"We are in a golden age of Dallas parks."

FROM RAILROAD TO URBAN GREENBELT

For readers outside Dallas, the Katy Trail's own transformation is almost as striking.

The 3.5-mile urban greenbelt park follows the former rail line of the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad — the MKT, commonly known as "the Katy" — through the densest part of Dallas, from Highland Park to Uptown to the Victory area edge of downtown. After the railroad era ended, Union Pacific donated the abandoned rail lines and land to the City of Dallas in 1993. In the late 1990s, neighborhood leaders began advocating to change the railroad line into an urban trail, and the nonprofit Friends of the Katy Trail was established in 1997 to construct and then manage the Trail, in partnership with the City.

That public-private partnership remains central to the Trail today. Friends of the Katy Trail operates, maintains and enhances the Trail for Dallas residents and visitors. Supported by individual and corporate donations, the organization raises funds for landscaping, lighting, water, security patrols, signage and other amenities while also organizing events and programs that build community around the Trail.

It is within that organization that Wood has found her professional home.

BUILDING SUPPORT FOR A DALLAS LANDMARK

Today, Wood is senior director, major gifts and membership for Friends of the Katy Trail, where her responsibilities span the majority of the organization's fundraising program.

She collaborates with Community Partners, grants, membership and annual support; leads capital campaigns and naming opportunities; develops donor materials and community messaging; plans donor events; and devises new sponsorship opportunities.

"I enjoy all aspects of this position," she said, "but I particularly love capital campaigns and overseeing corporate support."

And there are tangible signs of growth.

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When Wood became full-time with Friends of the Katy Trail in 2021, the organization had five Community Partners. Today, it has 27. Wood counts that growth, along with completing capital campaigns above goal, among the accomplishments of which she is proudest.

ADVOCATING FOR A PLACE — AND A CITY

The community leaders who envisioned transforming an abandoned railroad corridor into a trail, she said, could scarcely have anticipated how deeply it would become woven into Dallas life.

Wood calls the Katy Trail the “oceanfront property” of Dallas — a way of capturing its appeal to residents, businesses and developers. But she is just as interested in its personal impact.

People exercise there, spend time in nature and gather with friends. Some, she said, transform their physical or mental health through routines established on the Trail. Others meet a new friend there — or even a future life partner.

“Besides just being an enjoyable dose of nature, the Katy Trail is meaningful to so many in Dallas,” Wood said.

That significance makes fundraising more than an abstract development exercise. Each campaign, membership or corporate partnership ultimately helps sustain a public place widely used by the community, with over four million visits a year.

“We are in a golden age of Dallas parks,” Wood said. “It’s really gratifying to raise funds for one of our best, the Katy Trail.”

LESSONS FROM HAYNES BOONE

Wood sees a direct connection between that work and her years at Haynes Boone.

“At the firm, I learned how to be an effective advocate and to meet the expectations of different colleagues and clients,” she said. “These skills certainly translate to fundraising and to developing relationships with a variety of donors.”

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She also learned the value of becoming the person who really knows a subject. At Haynes Boone, Wood jokes, two of the "exciting" areas in which she developed particular knowledge were prejudgment interest and remittitur. The subject matter may be different now, but the lesson remains: Organizations benefit when people take ownership, develop expertise and become reliable resources.

One memory captures another standard she carried with her.

During a performance review, Haynes Boone Senior Counsel Nina Cortell told Wood that although she was a good writer, Cortell did not, as a matter of principle, give lawyers the highest possible rating for writing. There were always ways to become a better writer.

Wood thought about the feedback and decided Cortell was right.

"It was motivating for me," she said, before adding with a laugh: "No grade inflation at Haynes Boone!"

More broadly, Wood said, Haynes Boone came to represent "a total commitment to excellence." She has tried to carry that expectation into her work at Friends of the Katy Trail by seeking to elevate its fundraising, communications and donor events and increase awareness of the organization's work.

A CONNECTION THAT CAME FULL CIRCLE

Wood's connection with Haynes Boone continued long after she left the firm.

"I am a proud member of this alumni group," she said, adding that even after years away, she has always felt comfortable reaching out to Haynes Boone lawyers, past and present, when she could make a connection for the Trail or for someone else.

One of those connections helped create the relationship Friends of the Katy Trail has with Haynes Boone today.

Wood and the Trail's executive director happened to be waiting for a meeting at Harwood at the same time as Haynes Boone Senior Counsel Tim Powers. Wood mentioned that she had been hoping to establish the Trail's first law firm Community Partnership. That conversation led to a meeting with Haynes Boone Chair and Firmwide Managing Partner Taylor Wilson and, ultimately, to Haynes Boone becoming a Community Partner.

The relationship was tailored in part to meet the firm's emphasis on wellness, including Katy 5K registrations as an employee benefit. Wood said the firm's annual support makes a considerable difference in the organization's ability to care for the Trail.

The connection has deepened further. Haynes Boone Partner Larry Shosid now serves on the Friends of the Katy Trail Board.

For Wood, that development carries significance well beyond sponsorship.

"It is meaningful and feels full circle to me," she said. The relationship offers "a degree of comfort — not just financially for the Trail but to know we have access to the seasoned expertise of Larry and others at HB."

That matters, she said, because the Katy Trail touches so many aspects of life in Dallas and inevitably presents the organization with a wide variety of issues.

Wood's path offers one final lesson for lawyers — or anyone else who has built a career in one profession and wonders whether it is too late to pursue something quite different.

Her answer is emphatic.

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LEAN INTO THE NEXT THING

“Life is — usually — long and interesting, and you are absolutely capable of several different careers, depending on the stage of life,” she said. “Lean into new things and then there will always be opportunities, even if they seem small at first.”

Wood herself started that transition at Klyde Warren Park in a position well below the level of professional seniority she had once known. It gave her the chance to learn about a new industry.

Now she is leading major fundraising efforts for a Dallas institution, building partnerships across the city and applying skills first developed in the law.

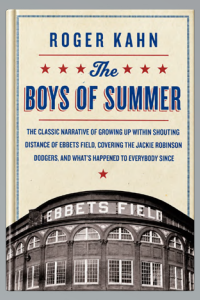
The setting has changed. The purpose has changed.

The advocacy has not.

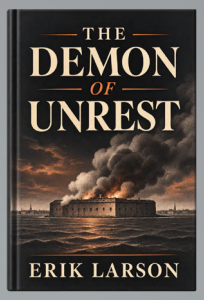
HB BOOK NOOK

The below are great reading recommendations sent in by the Haynes Boone community, including alumni, lawyers and business professionals.

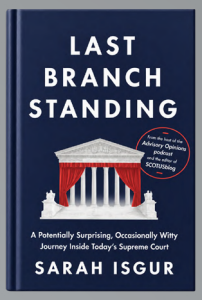
Have you read anything lately worth sharing? Send in your picks for our next issue by scanning the QR code.



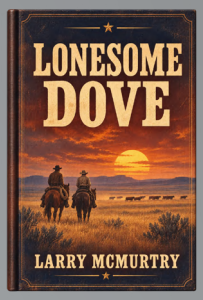
The Boys of Summer
A classic portrait of the Brooklyn Dodgers, baseball and American life.
Recommended by Grady Williams



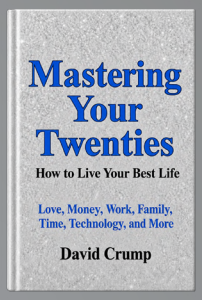
The Demon of Unrest
A gripping account of the tense months leading to the Civil War.
Recommended by Eric Deutsch



Last Branch Standing
A revealing look inside the modern U.S. Supreme Court.
Recommended by Steven Water



Lonesome Dove
An epic Western about friendship, adventure and life on the American frontier.
Recommended by George Gonzalez



Mastering Your Twenties
A practical guide to navigating early adulthood with purpose and perspective.
Recommended by David Crump



Mystic Spires Post-Mortem
A cold-case legal thriller exploring murder, technology and justice.
Recommended by Stacey Jerrigan



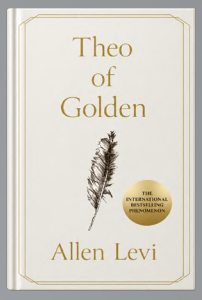
Our Missing Hearts
A moving dystopian novel about family, fear and resistance.
Recommended by Tiffany Ferris



The Paris Apartment
A suspenseful mystery about secrets, suspicion and a disappearance in Paris.
Recommended by Jacob Bourne



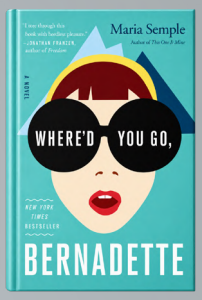
Project Hail Mary
A high-stakes sci-fi adventure driven by ingenuity and survival.
Recommended by Tiffany Ferris



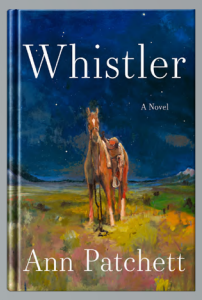
Theo of Golden
A heartwarming novel about generosity, connection and the power of kindness.
Recommended by Tiffany Ferris



There Is No Place for Us
An urgent portrait of working families facing homelessness in America.
Recommended by Punam Kaji



Where'd You Go, Bernadette
A witty, touching story of family, creativity and an unexpected disappearance.
Recommended by Paul Amiel



Whistler
A poignant novel about memory, love and enduring human connection.
Recommended by Camie McKee



TAYLOR REX ROBERTSON

Haynes Boone alum Taylor Rex Robertson reflects on law, wine and the thrilling pursuit of balance.

Imagine uncorking a bottle of wine with no label, no hint of what is inside. You catch the first notes as they escape, pour a splash in your glass, give the pool a swirl and venture a sip. The possibilities abound — from the grape and acidity to the finish — revealing themselves as they bloom in open air, developing ounce by ounce. You identify its characteristics, form an opinion, make a guess. Still, the same pour can taste different to the person beside you.

The unknown holds a certain intrigue in viticulture, an unpredictability that keeps connoisseurs seeking the next variety, the following vintage bringing new discoveries that shape tastes and trends for moments or even generations.

That's the thrill for certified sommelier Taylor Rex Robertson, whose legal career was grown at Oklahoma City University Law School, harvested at Haynes Boone as a trial lawyer in Dallas from 2014 to 2023 and has since continued aging and refining as vice president of global litigation and employment at Sabre Corporation. Whether navigating a new legal question across Sabre's worldwide footprint or pouring an unfamiliar wine for someone learning what they like, it's the newness and unpredictability that keep him satiated.

> I learned something new in each case that I used in the next.

"I used to say my two favorite days were trial and the first day we got a case — figuring out the puzzle in front of me and organizing my thoughts," Robertson said. "I used to think I wouldn't get that variety and intrigue in-house, but I have it in spades."

At the global travel tech giant, Robertson leads a "small but mighty team" managing litigation and employment matters in over 50 countries and 40 states, in addition to advising on collections, communications, cybersecurity, tax and M&A matters.

"I loathe redundancy," he said. "At Haynes Boone, I had the opportunity to work on so many different types of cases – oil and gas, healthcare, franchise, aviation, media financing, farm equipment leasing – and I learned something new in each case that I used in the next."

"I used to think I wouldn't get that variety and intrigue in-house, but I have it in spades."

He initially balked at the idea of going in-house, fearful of pigeonholing himself after nearly a decade sampling a broad range of legal work at Haynes Boone. It was only when he took a brief break from Big Law that he allowed the seeds of something different to take root. When a former Haynes Boone client who had become the chief legal officer at Sabre called and asked him to join her, it took convincing, then an adjustment period, but the outcome was one Robertson never saw coming. In his own words, "I'm happier than I ever thought I'd be."

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A common refrain among Haynes Boone alumni is that leaving the firm does not mean leaving it in the past. That rang true to Robertson early in his time at Sabre, when the firm was tapped as legal counsel in Sabre's sale of its Hospitality Solutions business to TPG, a deal led by Mergers and Acquisitions Co-Chair Dan Malone and Associate Josh Reisman.

"When that transaction took place, which included about 1,000 employees across the globe under different frameworks and legal guidelines, I was pulled in to help. That was new and gave me a crash course in the M&A deal process. For me, it had always been, 'There's a problem, now litigate it.' Here, I got the chance to write the documents I usually litigated. A big bonus was getting to work with Dan and Josh."

His penchant for variety manifested early in Robertson's legal career. As a second-year associate, he began studying all aspects of viticulture and winemaking, and within five years, he was not only a certified sommelier, but also won the U.S. Open for Blind Wine Tasting with his tasting partner, who both went on to represent Team USA at the World Wine Tasting Championship in France. Now, he leads seminars in private and corporate settings across Dallas with the goal of stripping the intimidation factor of wine for the average consumer.

"There are great wines people have never heard of or can't recognize. Most bottles listed on a wine menu aren't in English, few bottles outside the U.S. include the grape on the label, and a handful try to seduce you with cute pictures of zebras or giraffes," Robertson said. "Yet people are somehow supposed to know what they're drinking — or what they expect to be drinking. So, I try to make it accessible by teaching people why certain wines taste the way they do and having them blind taste and rate wines in the seminar. I can then tell them what wines they might also like and should try."

Ambitious as he is in his legal career, he's content with his place in the wine world — with no sights set on owning or running his own vineyard.

"The joke is: How do you make a small fortune in wine? You start with a large one," Robertson said. "I mean, I'll take one if somebody wants to give one to me, absolutely, but I don't have any aspirations other than teaching people about wine and making that wine menu or wine shelf less intimidating."

Put to the test of indexing his career against his vast wine knowledge, Robertson said Haynes Boone favorably reflects a bottle of Brunello from Italy.

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"It's made from Sangiovese clone, the same grape that makes Chianti, but far more formidable in structure and quality that evolves so well over time," he said. "Haynes Boone has that good, definable culture with consistency that can also change over time and succeed in different environments. So, too, with Sangiovese – the grape does well in oak, steel and terracotta. It's calm but can also be aggressive and firm due to high acid and high tannin. That's Haynes Boone."



And Sabre?

"Sauvignon Blanc, because it can be completely different depending on where you are in the world," Robertson said. "When I get asked a question, I have to consider every time, 'What country does the employee work in? What's the governing law in the contract? Because my answer depends on that.' Sabre is a global company with employees and contracts all over the world, a global presence much like Sauvignon Blanc — a wine that can be very well made and still be uniquely different country to country."

If Haynes Boone is an elegantly structured red and Sabre is a versatile white, the throughline is the life that Robertson has earned along the way — and it is also exactly what sommeliers would tell you separates a good wine from a great one: variety with balance.

"As an associate, partners you report to expect a certain amount of work," he said. "But because I wanted to litigate broadly, I had to branch out. You can't just drop your work from Partner 1 when Partner 2 comes along. So, I had to learn to carry that — moving between matters and being flexible. In a company like Sabre, where a single day can present questions in every continent except Antarctica, managing that like an air traffic controller is essential. That skill is something I owe to my time at Haynes Boone and the opportunities I was given."

Taylor Rex Robertson's Recs for Winning a Dinner Party

The Challenge: $50 max per bottle. Make the host look cool.

Red: Spanish Rioja – preferably from López de Heredia
"They're the cheapest wines in the world for their age and quality. Seriously, don't tell anyone. You can find a $30 López de Heredia Rioja that should sell for $130."

White: French White Burgundy
"It is hard to find under $50, but a Chablis sitting just under that price point is usually consistent."

Rosé: Rosé Champagne
"I don't like a ton of still rosés, so I would choose rosé Champagne. American sparkling rosé can work too, if it's made traditionally. Mirabelle and Schramsberg are great examples."

Sparkling: Champagne
"You can find good, legit Champagne for under $50 – Perrier-Jouet is one. There is very good English sparkling wine too, although it's usually more expensive. I also love Franciacorta when I can find it."

Wildcard: Tannat
"Uruguay's grape is Tannat. It's kind of like malbec — really juicy and good."

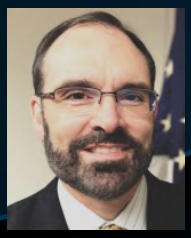
ALUMNI NEWS & NOTES



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A RENAISSANCE
IN THE HILL COUNTRY

For Buddy Clark, retirement isn't quite the right word.

"A renaissance," he said.

After leaving Haynes Boone in 2025, where he spent more than 25 years helping build the firm's Energy Practice Group, Clark is busier than ever.

The conference rooms and client meetings have given way to cedar trees, limestone, excavators, welding projects and an ever-expanding list of things he wants to build.

"I've been learning new things on a daily basis," Clark said.

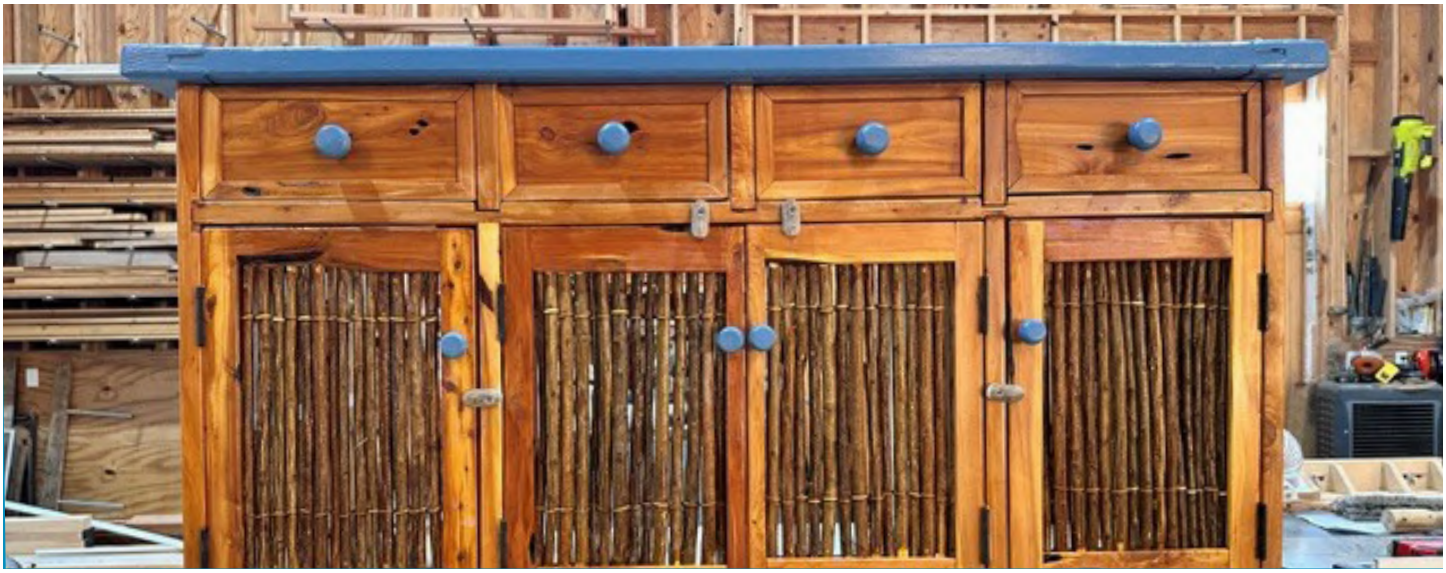
In many ways, it's a fitting next chapter for a lawyer whose professional life was defined by relationships, curiosity and building things that last.

BUILDING SOMETHING BIGGER

Growing up in Houston, a career connected to the energy industry felt almost inevitable. His father spent 45 years in the oil business, and Clark entered the legal profession in the early 1980s, just as the energy industry was entering another period of profound change.

By the time he joined Haynes Boone's Houston office in August 1999, he had already developed substantial experience representing energy companies and their lenders.

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He arrived with a group of approximately a dozen lawyers from several practice areas, including banking, securities and energy. Looking back, he remembers attending a firm retreat shortly after joining and immediately recognizing something different about Haynes Boone: a culture where people were invested in building something together.

Over the next quarter century, Clark became one of the nation's leading advisers to energy companies and their lenders and served as co-chair of Haynes Boone's Energy Practice Group. He advised clients through booms, downturns, commodity-price swings, restructurings and other periods of transformation that constantly reshaped the industry.

He also became a recognized voice on the forces shaping energy markets and finance. Clark worked with the firm's bankruptcy lawyers to develop Haynes Boone's energy bankruptcy reports relied on by the industry and national news agencies as the source of information on bankruptcies in the oil patch. He also authored "Oil Capital: The History of American Oil, Wildcatters, Independents and Their Bankers," his 2016 book chronicling the relationship between independent oil producers and the financial institutions that financed their growth.

Yet for all of those accomplishments, Clark doesn't identify a particular deal, publication or industry milestone as the defining achievement of his career.

"When you look back over a long career, it's hard to pick one thing," he said. "What stands out is the continued, steady growth and development of our energy practice and working within the firm itself."

For Clark, that growth was never about numbers, but about people.

THE POWER OF RELATIONSHIPS

After decades in an industry where markets can change almost overnight, Clark's most enduring lesson has little to do with commodity prices.

"The legal community is really a small world," he said.

Early in his career, Clark remembers walking into industry conferences and networking events and feeling as though he knew no one in the room. Years later, after investing in relationships throughout the energy and legal communities, those same rooms looked very different.

> **An adversary today may become a client tomorrow.**

That experience now informs the advice he gives younger lawyers today: Get out, meet people and build relationships.

The reason is simple, he said. Careers are long, and they rarely follow a straight line.

"An adversary today may become a client tomorrow. A colleague may become a referral source years down the road," he said. "It's important to maintain very good professional working relationships."

That philosophy also mirrors what he valued most about Haynes Boone.

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While many colleagues and mentors helped shape Clark's legal career and helped him become a better lawyer, firm co-founder Mike Boone left a different kind of impact.

"Everyone who has been at this firm recognizes Mike as a unique leader," Clark said.

Clark credits Mike with helping create a culture rooted in collaboration, communication and teamwork, one in which people felt invested not only in their own work, but in the success of the firm as a whole.

It's a philosophy Clark carried into his own leadership of the Energy Practice Group. While winning work and adding lawyers were important, Clark said building a successful practice was really about creating the same sense of collaboration and shared purpose that had drawn him to the firm years earlier.

That mindset has stayed with him.

STILL INVESTED IN WHAT'S NEXT

Leaving the firm did not mean leaving behind the people or the practice he helped build.

In fall 2026, Clark welcomed members of the firm's Energy Transactions and Regulatory Group to his Hill Country ranch for an off-site retreat focused on the group's strategy for 2027.

The location was fitting, as a property Clark had spent years transforming from undeveloped land into something of his own became the setting for a conversation about building the practice's next chapter.

The lawyers stepped away from their day-to-day work to discuss strategic direction and growth, including financial performance, long-term positioning and key client relationships. They also discussed opportunities to expand in certain markets and business development and marketing priorities ranging from cross-selling and alumni and referral networks to thought leadership, events, sponsorships, awards and rankings.

For Clark, the gathering was an opportunity to reconnect with colleagues and reflect on where the practice is headed.

"It was both rewarding and reassuring for me to see my former partners talking about what they are doing to build the energy group. These gatherings inspire and reinforce the common goal to pursue excellence for the firm and in their practice."

In that sense, the retreat was a natural extension of the role Clark played throughout his career. Even after stepping away from the firm, he remains interested in its people, its relationships and its future.

And then, of course, he returns to the ranch.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF PRACTICE

Clark purchased the Hill Country property around the start of the pandemic, land he originally viewed as a blank canvas.

"It's been a very vibrant landscape that keeps changing with the seasons, with the temperatures, with the weather," he said.

Rather than rely on others to build on the property, Clark decided to learn how to do much of the work himself.

He started with a woodworking shop, affectionately referred to as "the barn," which also includes an apartment, before starting construction on the main compound.

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“THESE GATHERINGS INSPIRE AND REINFORCE THE COMMON GOAL TO PURSUE EXCELLENCE FOR THE FIRM AND IN THEIR PRACTICE.”

Then came the doors. To date, Clark has built over 40 doors, seven bathroom vanities, pantries, beds and other pieces of custom furniture. Much of the wood comes directly from trees harvested on the property or reclaimed wood from old buildings in Texas and France.

The projects have since expanded well beyond woodworking. He’s purchased a sawmill, skid steer and an excavator equipped with a rock saw attachment, allowing him to cut limestone from the property for fireplace mantels and other building materials. Along the way, he’s taught himself welding, wiring and irrigation design.

One of his more challenging creations is a hand-built headstock for an old Coast Guard bell that now hangs atop the barn. As Clark discovered, “there aren’t any instructions on the internet on how to build a belfry.”

There is something familiar in that approach. Throughout his career, Clark gravitated toward complicated problems, learned what he needed to know and worked with others to build a solution. At the ranch, the problems are different. The satisfaction, however, is much the same.

A RENAISSANCE, NOT A RETIREMENT

For decades, Clark helped build an energy practice and contribute to the growth of a firm that expanded dramatically during his tenure.

Today, he is still building.

The materials have changed from contracts and transactions to wood and limestone. The setting has shifted from Houston conference rooms to the Texas Hill Country. And instead of advising clients through the next turn in the energy markets, he is figuring out how to cut a piece of rock, build a door or bring an idea to life.

But the mindset remains remarkably familiar: Stay curious, learn something new, bring people together and build something lasting.

And if the growing list of projects on Clark’s horizon is any indication, his renaissance is just getting started.



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DANNY WANG

Boomerang Feature:
A Global Career, and a Clearer Sense of What Matters

> **OF COURSE,** once you become a lawyer, you realize it's very different from what you see on television."

Danny Wang didn't just build a global legal career; he tested it.

From Australia to Beijing, Hong Kong and eventually New York, Wang's career has taken him across some of the world's most dynamic legal markets. Each move offered a new perspective on the profession, but it was the ability to compare those experiences firsthand that ultimately shaped what he values most in a law firm.

After first joining Haynes Boone in 2022, Wang spent more than two-and-a-half years with the firm before pursuing another opportunity in New York's structured finance and fund finance market in 2025. When the opportunity arose to return in 2026, the decision felt like a natural next step. Now back as an associate in the firm's Fund Finance and Structured Finance Practice Groups, he brings with him not only a global perspective, but also a renewed appreciation for the professional environment that helped shape his early years as a lawyer.

BUILT ACROSS MARKETS

Wang's interest in law began well before he stepped into a law firm, inspired, in part, by television shows like "Boston Legal."

"I thought practicing law looked exciting," he said with a laugh. "Of course, once you become a lawyer, you realize it's very different from what you see on television."

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"WHAT STOOD OUT TO ME WAS THAT PEOPLE WERE WILLING TO TEACH. PARTNERS WOULD EXPLAIN WHY THEY WERE MAKING CERTAIN DECISIONS INSTEAD OF JUST TELLING YOU WHAT TO DO."

After earning a law degree in Australia, he pursued further legal studies in Beijing, where he gained early exposure to private equity through an internship while completing his master's program. Those experiences sparked an interest in transactional work and laid the foundation for a career that would eventually span several major financial centers.

Following his studies, Wang moved to Hong Kong and began his legal career, working on capital markets and finance matters in one of the world's busiest business hubs. The experience provided an intensive introduction to transactional practice, where deadlines were constant and expectations moved just as quickly.

"The pace was intense," Wang said. "There was always another deal and another deadline. You learned quickly because you had to."

Working in Hong Kong also exposed Wang to a different set of client expectations and workplace dynamics.



"In Hong Kong, clients could call at any time and expect things immediately," he said. "Here, even when the work is demanding, there's a level of professionalism and respect for your time."

The experience pushed him to become more adaptable and self-reliant while giving him valuable insight into how different legal markets operate. Years later, those comparisons would help inform what he ultimately valued most in a firm.

WHERE DEVELOPMENT LOOKS DIFFERENT

By the time Wang relocated to New York and joined Haynes Boone, he had already experienced multiple legal systems and working styles. What he found at the firm offered a different perspective on professional development.

While the work itself was a natural fit, what stood out most was the firm's approach to developing younger lawyers. Rather than simply assigning tasks, partners frequently took time to explain their thinking, discuss strategy and provide context behind key decisions. For Wang, those conversations proved just as valuable as the work itself.

"What stood out to me was that people were willing to teach," he said. "Partners would explain why they were making certain decisions instead of just telling you what to do."

The experience reinforced the idea that professional development is about more than technical training. Understanding how experienced lawyers approach problems, communicate with clients and make strategic judgments helped accelerate Wang's growth in ways that extended beyond any individual matter.

"You learn more when you understand the reasoning behind the work," he said. "That was something I appreciated very early on."

Just as important was the collaborative nature of the practice. Wang found opportunities to work alongside attorneys across different experience levels and gain exposure to a variety of matters, allowing him to refine both his technical skills and broader understanding of the industry.

TESTING THE MARKET

After more than two-and-a-half years at Haynes Boone, Wang decided it was time to test himself in a new environment. Having built a career across multiple countries and legal markets, he was curious about what a different platform might offer, whether that meant exposure to larger deals, a different structure or a new way of working.

"You learn more when you understand the reasoning behind the

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“You hear about different firms and different opportunities throughout your career,” Wang said. “At some point, it’s natural to want to experience those things for yourself.”

The move offered a valuable opportunity to broaden his perspective, giving him additional responsibility, exposure to a different organizational structure and an inside look at another approach to client service and deal execution. Equally important, it gave him a basis for comparison.

Having worked in multiple countries and at different firms, Wang found himself evaluating not only the work itself, but also the environments in which that work was being done.

In some settings, he observed, the pace of practice left less room for mentorship and training. Lawyers were expected to become independent quickly, which offered its own benefits but also highlighted the importance of having experienced colleagues invested in your development.

“It helped me realize how valuable mentorship can be,” he said. “When people are willing to spend time helping you develop, it makes a significant difference.”

Far from viewing the move as a detour, Wang sees it as an important chapter in his career. The experience confirmed that professional development is shaped by more than the work itself; the people around you and the culture you are part of can matter just as much.

CHOOSING TO COME BACK

When the opportunity arose to return to Haynes Boone, the decision felt less like a return and more like an intentional step forward.

By that point, Wang had experienced different legal markets, multiple firm cultures and a range of professional environments. Returning wasn’t simply about coming back to a familiar place. It was about returning with a clearer understanding of the type of practice and culture he wanted to be part of over the long term.

“Once you’ve worked in different places, you have a better sense of what’s important to you,” Wang said. “For me, it became clear that Haynes Boone was the right fit.”

He points to the firm’s collegial culture as one of the defining factors in that decision. Whether working with partners, peers or more junior attorneys, Wang believes Haynes Boone fosters an environment built on collaboration, accessibility and mutual support.

“People here are professional but also genuinely supportive,” he said. “That makes a big difference in how you experience the work.”

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Today, Wang continues to build his practice in fund finance and structured finance while exploring opportunities across related areas. The firm's structure allows him to work across disciplines, providing the flexibility to broaden his experience while continuing to refine his professional focus.

Looking back, Wang believes the decision to leave ultimately reinforced the value of what he had already found. His advice to other associates considering a move is simple: Look beyond titles, rankings and deal size and evaluate the full picture.

"Every opportunity has tradeoffs," he said. "It's important to think about the people you'll be working with, the training you'll receive and the kind of environment that will help you grow."

After working across multiple cities, firms and legal markets, Wang returned with a stronger appreciation for the factors that shape a fulfilling legal career. And for him, that perspective ultimately led back to Haynes Boone.

HAYNES BOONE

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