

For those of
you who
guessed
'Mike Smith,'
you would be
correct!



Mike, I know that your family has long-time Georgia roots, in fact you enjoy agriculture and still operate a 'cow-calf' operation. Can you tell us about that?

My Mom grew up in East Tennessee cutting tobacco and my Dad in Wolfork Valley (Rabun County) with a 2,500 layer house (eggs), milk cows, hogs, etc...

Their families had off-the-farm jobs, but they had to grow what they ate, garden and meat. My brother and I have always had tractors, piddled with growing hay and small gardens. When my boys were small, we were trying to teach some financial management/investment lessons, and discussed everything from the buried Mason jar in the back yard to lottery tickets. We settled on buying a few Spring calves, put them on the pasture for weight gain, and sold them in the Fall. That turned into keeping heifers and buying bulls, and next thing you

know... At the peak we had about 40 head, but with recent drought and labor shortage (going off to college), we have scaled back to only about 10 cows at present. It's kind of strange, but a lot of lawyers that you would never expect, have cows...maybe that's why all the bulls\$%^#@!

Most of us prefer having four wheels on the ground, but you enjoy a two-wheeled sport?

My Dad started my brother and I on motorcycles at around 5 years of age. I did the same thing with my kids. I got to race a few times growing up, and that sealed the deal. We have a track in the back pasture, and we ride at Durhamtown and a couple of other local tracks. I turned 50 last year, and I still have to go to work every Monday, so I ride a bit easier these days.





Would you tell us about how after a long day at the office, you find 'escape.'

We are all gearheads around our house, so anything with a motor and wheels is a good start. I also have had various pieces of heavy equipment through the years to clear or work land, keep the motocross track, etc..., but mostly because that stuff is just cool to have. As silly as it sounds, rolling a 28,000 lb. Caterpillar around knocking down trees...that's a great way to manage stress and my attitude toward opposing counsel.

Lastly, word on the street has it that you do not dream of retiring to FL or CA, but rather dream of another career for your 'bucket list?'



Yeah, like most lawyers, I long for the day that I wake up and go to bed with just my problems. Lawyers never really seem to retire or do anything else in life, and I probably won't be any different. But, I do think it would be cool to work at Disney World - the happiest place on Earth. I don't care if I'm a ride operator, or a tour guide, or if I pick up trash. That place is just a fun place to be. In a bigger picture kind of way, it has become a hobby to me to ask lawyers ahead of me in years how they have or are planning to retire, if at all, and the responses are really interesting.



You guys should do a monthly column on "How Lawyers Retire," just to show us all ideas for the light at the end of the tunnel. One guy I recently surveyed told it like this: "...When the last kid left and the last dog died, we sold the big house and bought a small home on a Florida island - not expensive and just big enough for the wife and me. Then we rented a condo in Atlanta, so that I could come back one week each month

and work on a few cases at a time, just to stay in the game." Another lawyer told me recently told me this way: "If my husband dies first, I'm moving to the beach and will mourn him in the sand with a margarita in hand." I am certain that she was serious, and Disney World doesn't seem like too much of reach, either...

Thank you, Mike Smith. Most interesting. WD