

COLUMBUS BUSINESS FIRST

People to Know: Brett Thornton

KATY SMITH
Columbus Business First

Brett Thornton

Partner, Porter Wright Morris & Arthur LLP

How did you get into this profession? I graduated from the Fisher College of Business at Ohio State University in 1997, and then worked briefly in San Francisco in the banking industry. I always had a curiosity about the law and decided to pursue my juris doctorate at George Washington University. Throughout law school, I maintained a focus on business and financing issues, and the practice I entered extended naturally from these interests and experiences. After law school I quickly realized that maintaining a sharp practice requires flexibility and a commitment to constantly learning and improving.

What major case are you following closely right now and what ramifications could its outcome have on business? Our corporate group constantly follows numerous cases that could have an effect on our clients' businesses. We also carefully follow market trends and proposed legislation. Recently we have been closely following cases involving Ohio's Dormant Mineral Act, which will resolve disputes

about who owns title to millions (or billions) worth of mineral interests. We have also been following cases and proposed legislation that could cause the re-characterization of infrastructure assets for tax purposes, and cases involving the determination of employment status for contractors.

How can the legal profession best train new lawyers for future leadership roles? I think new lawyers need exposure to a broad range of experiences with different types of legal matters and issues, as well as different kinds of people and organizations. A wide scope of experiences provides a lawyer with the opportunity to develop the confidence and effective problem solving mechanisms needed for leadership roles. It's impossible to have a canned answer that fits every issue that may arise for a client, but experience can allow us to develop consistent processes for effectively and efficiently dealing with any type of challenge.

What is the profession's greatest challenge? The way in which business clients engage and employ lawyers has been in transition during my time in practice. I think the profession's greatest challenge right now is managing the number of people entering the



Brett Thornton

profession and honestly educating them on the type and number of opportunities available. After people have joined the profession, we need to focus on training them in ways that create the skills necessary to meet the evolving expectations of the businesses that will employ or engage them.

Brett Thornton is a partner in Porter Wright's mergers and acquisitions, and corporate finance practice groups. He also chairs the firm's oil and gas practice.

porterwright
PORTER WRIGHT MORRIS & ARTHUR LLP