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WHAT WAS THE GREATEST CHALLENGE YOU'VE FACED OVER THE PAST YEAR?

I face and conquer the same challenge every year — helping young lawyers within our firm grow their practices and become even greater assets to our clients. Our firm has benefited in this economy by being able to capture some excellent talent from the larger firms in the area, resulting in personnel growth. I continue to be responsible for coordinating the mentoring of new lawyers, personally mentoring many of them, and developing and implementing our monthly associate training program. This past year, I worked to develop a guest attorney program with the City of Dallas that allows our associates to be of service to our city and also hone valuable trial skills.



After studying theater at an arts magnet high school in Dallas, Wood started college as a theater major, with intentions to become the next Meryl Streep. Then reality hit — how can she make a living, still using her talents for acting and improvisation? After taking some pre-law classes, she fell in love with the law, and knew litigation would be her passion.



OF WHAT CAREER ACCOMPLISHMENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD?

I am most proud of my opportunity to help make new law in the State of Texas. Early in my career, I was the junior lawyer on a state court case representing a telecommunications provider in a regulatory dispute. The case went on for years, and I eventually tried the case and worked on the winning appeals. Follow up federal litigation was filed by a number of telecommunications

providers, including my client. During the federal litigation, I worked with the representatives of the opposing party, the various telecommunications providers, and a state legislator to help draft a law that was acceptable to all the parties and that legislated the very thing the parties had been fighting over for years.

WHAT WAS YOUR GREATEST FAILURE?

I have watched personal animosity between opposing lawyers to a case unreasonably drive up the costs of litigation for their clients and cloud judgment. If I ever felt like the other side was getting to me on a personal level and influencing my actions in a case because of it, I would consider that to be a failure. I try to have a thick skin and to refrain from needless battles that don't advance my client's case.

WHAT TRENDS DO YOU SEE IN BUSINESS LITIGATION?

I see an increase in the amount of documentary evidence involved, as parties generate more virtual paper through e-mail communications, which eventually winds up having to be produced in litigation. This can drive up the cost of litigation, and can be burdensome to the clients. Fortunately, I have learned to use technology to my advantage and developed methods to help clients keep costs down.

