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This week's Q&A with

Jason Cerise

***Jason Cerise** is a Partner in Locke Lord's New Orleans office practicing in the areas of Bankruptcy, Restructuring and Insolvency, Energy, Energy Litigation and Consumer Finance. Jason has always sought out other new and interesting types of work, as he enjoys the challenges they offer and the experience of working with different colleagues and client industries. Because the New Orleans office serves a wide variety of clients in Louisiana, Jason has been able to work on many other matters, including complex and commercial litigation, corporate, transactional, real estate and regulatory.*



More About Jason

What has helped you to become successful in your field?

I believe that the "cross-training" I've experienced by working on many different kinds of cases has helped me become a more effective advisor for my clients. For example, when working on a transactional matter, I can often identify potential disputes before the deal is closed and advise the client as to how the dispute is likely to play out if litigated based on years of courtroom experience. My experience in the bankruptcy arena, where procedural battles, discovery, evidentiary hearings (which seem more often than not to occur on an emergency basis with little notice), appeals and complex problem-solving are routine occurrences, has been invaluable in delivering positive litigation outcomes. I remember, as a young bankruptcy Associate at my former firm with two trials and countless hearings under my belt, comparing notes with a (very talented) litigation Associate who had yet to see the inside of a court room.

How did you know that you wanted to practice law? // What inspired you to become a lawyer?

I wasn't really certain I wanted to practice law until I was in law school. I have always been analytical by nature and just thought it might be something I'd enjoy doing, so I gave it a shot. My time in law school and working as a Summer Associate cemented the decision for me. That was when I realized the profession suited my personality and skill set and how much I enjoyed the work.

What drives or motivates you on your hardest days/during your most difficult matters?

I often feel like my hardest days, or those spent working difficult cases, are my best days. I try to view every set of issues from the perspective of the client, whether that client is a sole proprietor or an executive in a publicly traded company. This helps me stay mindful that the outcome of the case, and by extension the quality and thoroughness of my work, is something that has a significant and lasting impact on the person who placed his or her confidence in me. When it's crunch time and the days are long while time is short, I'm driven to do everything in my power to deliver clients the outcome they deserve.

What do you do to give back to the community?

One of the things I love to do most is coach playground sports and the school swim team. As a former competitive swimmer, I've always been drawn to the sport. It's one of the few sports where performance is objectively measurable, which means that swimmers can see how they stack up against the competition, set very specific goals and do what's necessary to achieve them throughout the season. I also enjoy assistant coaching my kids' basketball teams. I was never a great basketball player, but I enjoy teaching the kids the fundamentals of the game.

What do you do to relax and reset after a long week?

I enjoy fishing and golf. But most weekends, my social calendar is dictated by my wife and/or kids. Luckily, my kids' friends have some pretty cool parents who enjoy food and fun as much as I do.

What would be your fantasy career if you weren't a lawyer?

I think I'd enjoy being a chef. I worked in some nice restaurants in high school and college and loved the constant interaction with new (and often weird) people. Plus, I love to cook.



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