

An Interview with New Hanson Bridgett Partner, Michelle Akerman

Michelle represents owners, contractors, and subcontractors in all aspects of construction law — from negotiating and drafting contracts, to advising on best practices, to litigating complex, multi-million dollar disputes. She employs a pragmatic, business-oriented approach to all of her cases to help her clients achieve their best results.

1. Why did you become a lawyer?

I became a lawyer after spending five years in pharmaceutical research because I realized that my real passion was connecting with people and helping them solve their problems. I wanted to continue to do something intellectually rigorous, but that had more of a human element to it, and law just made sense. As soon as I started law school, I knew I had made the right decision. I felt like I had found my people, as crazy as that sounds! Ten years later, helping my clients solve their problems is still what drives me every day.

2. Besides law, what are some of your other passions?

Fly fishing. The combination of solitude, being outdoors, and the rhythm of fly-casting is, in my view, the perfect anecdote to the stresses of everyday life. I think of it as my meditation.

3. If I wasn't practicing law, I would be...

A journalist. I love to write, I'm a news junkie, and I love to travel.

4. What keeps you busy outside of Hanson Bridgett?

My family! I have a 1-year-old and a 5-year-old, so "free time" just isn't in my vocabulary anymore. Nothing teaches you time management and delegation better than having kids.

5. What would be your proudest accomplishment as an attorney?

Winning a complete defense judgment for my client, a local high-end grocery chain, after a two-week arbitration concerning the construction of their newest store. One of the best, or at least the most memorable, parts about it was that our arbitrator quoted



by Michelle Akerman

Cool Hand Luke in the arbitration award.

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