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Attorney to Watch Brandan J. Pratt

Knowledge is Power

By Jackson Williams

A trained civil engineer, Brandan J. Pratt began working as a construction manager for a Chicago real estate developer following his graduation from the University of Illinois.

"I was constantly confronted with legal issues," Pratt said. "After speaking to our developer's in house counsel, I realized that armed with a Juris Doctor, my civil engineering degree and my experience in construction management, I would have a powerful tool."

Pratt enrolled in Marquette Law School. Following graduation, he relocated to Fort Lauderdale. "I was fortunate to begin working for a trust and estate litigation firm early on," he said. Pratt quickly came to recognize that he would spend his career focused on trust and estate litigation, so he pursued his graduate certificate in financial planning and his certified financial planner designation. "I knew that to effectively help my clients, I needed to have a strong background in tax, investment management, insurance and other financial areas. I felt my knowledge in those areas was lacking, so I made the call to get the education my client's deserved."

To date, Pratt has handled hundreds of trust, probate and estate cases. "While I'm proud of having helped touch so many people's lives, I try to keep the perspective of the client," he said. "They will most likely be involved in only one trust and estate case in their lifetime. It will be one of the most stressful experiences of their life. In that crisis situation, it is rewarding to be able to help them obtain a successful result."

For the first eight years of his practice, Pratt worked as an attorney at various firms gaining the knowledge – and education – to effectively represent his clients. Once he felt secure in his ability, he set out to fulfill his original ambition, founding his own firm.

Now, as a managing partner of Huth, Pratt & Milhasuser, Pratt has embraced the many roles that come with owning a business. "In those early years my only role was to be an attorney," he said. "Now, I've been thrust into the roles of office manager, business owner and lead counsel."

"I have faced the challenges of entrepreneurship with hard work, luck and a lot of trial and error," he laughed.

According to Pratt, you need three things to have a successful firm. "First, you need to develop skill and expertise in your chosen practice area. Second, you need additional qualifications. For example, if you're practicing trust and estate litigation, an educational background in finance would be necessary. Third, you need to have an established network of professional relationships."

Pratt has built a network of professional connections through his own work on the board of the young lawyers division of the Broward County Bar Association. Today, he serves on the board of the South Palm Beach County Bar Association.



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