

Experience Teaches

PERFECTING THE PRACTICE OF LAW



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If C. Carlton Folsom has learned anything from 27 years as an attorney, it's that "you just can't beat experience" as a teacher. "I would like to think I was a good lawyer when I had five years experience, but doing it for 27 years makes a difference," he said. "You get a sense of what doesn't look right, what doesn't feel right" whether you are hearing testimony or looking at an asset list.

As a teenager, Folsom had two career goals: to serve in the military and to practice law in the courtroom. After earning his law degree on a scholarship from Mercer University, he joined the Air Force and was assigned to the Judge Advocate General (JAG) corps in his home state of Louisiana.

Even a young JAG officer must try cases "among senior officers and senior enlisted personnel. They are well-educated and it forces you to up your game, to learn quickly and operate at a high level in the courtroom," he said. He also served as a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney and was involved in a high-profile case, a medical malpractice suit in which an Air Force drug lab manager was found to be falsifying test results. Folsom helped clear a pilot wrongly accused of using marijuana.


Folsom refers to those experiences as "being part of the world's biggest law firm with Uncle Sam." After leaving the Air Force, he wanted to be in a small firm or solo practice. He worked for 10 years in Louisiana, then returned to Georgia in 2005 and opened his solo practice in Suwanee. About 60 percent of business comes from divorces and the rest from criminal defense.

He still loves courtroom work. "When you have a jury trial for a criminal case, basically you live/eat/drink the case," he said. Litigators must think on their feet, process lots of information, and make split-second decisions.

"When you are in the courtroom ready to hear the verdict, your heart is in your throat. It's a big moment; there is nothing quite like it, at least not in this field." Folsom has worked hundreds of jury trials and that experience helps him get favorable settlements for his clients, because the other side knows he can skillfully try a case if necessary.

Divorce cases require different skills, including "an unofficial degree in psychology" gained from experience, Folsom said. He often handles complex divorces where one or both spouses have assets in a closely held business. It's not unusual to spend up to a year ferreting out assets one party is trying to hide. "When people are going through divorce, they are good people you meet at the worst time. I have to lead them through that time and get them where they need to be, to be successful for the rest of their life," he said.

Folsom and his wife Rina, a legal secretary, work together at the law firm. When not involved in a high-pressure case, they enjoy traveling and trying new restaurants.

For details about the services offered by C. Carlton Folsom, Attorney at Law, call 770-720-4353 or visit <http://carltonfolsomattorney.com>. 



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