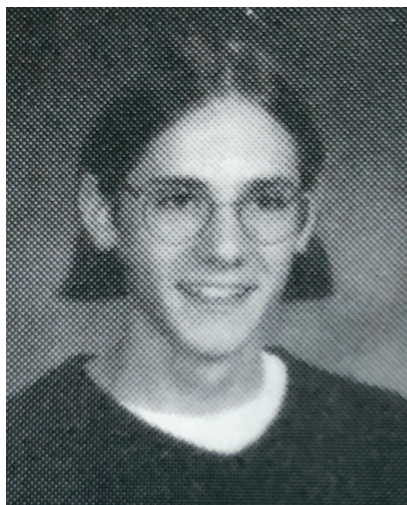


Meet the President

BARBERS



EARLY YEARS

Tell me about your childhood – where did you grow up? Do you have siblings? Did you have any childhood interests or hobbies?

I had an amazing childhood. Born and bred right here in Louisville. My dad always said, “If I could do it all over again, I’d be one of my kids.” He was right. I have two brothers and one sister; all of whom are incredible people with great careers and families. I was lucky to have two parents who truly loved each other. It made for a very happy home. My mother is incredible, she ran every cub scout and school activity I remember. My dad always made sure I had the latest Nintendo game and the cheat codes. We traveled a lot, Kiawah, Hilton Head, skiing all over Colorado, dude ranches, Hawaii... I was incredibly lucky to be the child of my parents.

Looking back, what about your family and/or childhood had the greatest impact on you?

Not to get too into it, but my father’s death when I was 17. While I always had the support of my family, it impressed upon me that my life and future depended on no one else. I had to study and work hard to achieve the life I wanted. It gave me a lot of drive. It also instilled resilience.

You attended Trinity College in Connecticut. What did you study there? What was appealing to you about Trinity College, and what was your college experience like?

An East Coast liberal arts education and I were made for each other. It was an adventure. I specifically chose a school where I had no connections and knew no one. I forced myself into a proving ground. I studied whatever I wanted. My freshman year I took a biology class. After a few classes, I knew this had nothing to do with my field of interest. I quit going. It was the only F I ever got. I don’t regret it. It was a waste of my attention. Were it not for that F I would have graduated *summa cum laude*. I focused on political science and legal studies and loved it.

CAREER TODAY

Who would you consider to be some of your mentors in the Louisville legal community?

Just ask me which of my kids I like better... There are so many. There are countless lawyers that have been so unbelievably gracious to me. I hate to even list a few for fear of missing anyone. I’ll take a stab at it. Don Darby, David Gazak, Kevin Weis, John Bilby, Richard Nash, Scooter Bell... This is just a small snapshot. There are also a number of folks I graduated with who rely on each other: Brian Brownfield, Wilson Greene, Wade Yeoman, Aaron Murphy... The list truly goes on.

But more than anyone else, Kurt Scharfenberger. He’s been a reliable friend and mentor professionally and personally. He has a great way of focusing my attention on what’s truly at issue. His door has always been open. He’s one of the finest people I know. I hope I can provide the same to others in the future.

What do you think most people misunderstand about being an attorney?

We don’t know everything and can’t fix everything. Some problems don’t have a fancy loophole solution.

LEGAL BEGINNINGS

Did you always know you wanted to be a lawyer? If so, what brought you to that conclusion? If not, when and why did you decide to pursue a career in the law?

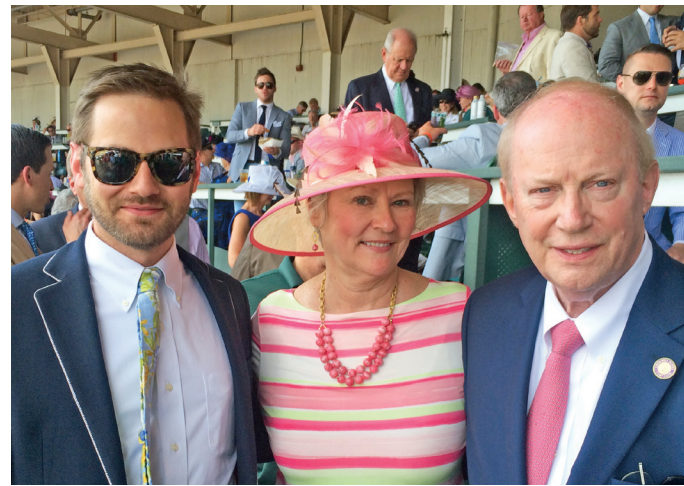
My dad was an OB/GYN, and some of his best friends, Mike Greene and Doug Morris, were lawyers. Mike and Doug are some of the happiest people I know. It was an easy choice to be a plaintiff’s lawyer: they’re successful and help people. It’s a win-win.

You went to UofL for law school. What was your law school experience like?

UofL was a smart move. It didn’t break the bank compared to other schools. I had saved enough working in D.C. where I could cover the cost with a line of credit instead of a student loan. I knew I was going to spend the rest of my life in Louisville. I get to see my law school friends several times a week. It is a lot of fun to practice law sixteen years later with an old study or beer buddy.

Any other “beginnings” you had after law school before you went into practice?

Going out on my own was the best career move I’ve made. It allows me to focus more on my family. Sick kid, no problem. Big win, it’s all mine. Big loss, and they happen, well, it’s part of the territory. I enjoy the freedom to take the cases I want and practice the way I want. My past employers would never have allowed me to take on some of the cases that turned into my most successful.



BAR ASSOCIATION

Why did you decide to get involved in the LBA?

Time to be honest: I had started my own practice and needed to network.

What do you think are the top benefits of being an LBA member?

This is hard to pinpoint, but I think the networking. And not for business. What I mean is that LBA members—judges, opposing parties—we don't see each other as the unreasonable lawyer. Instead, I see Curt Sitlinger and think, "I like that guy, he's nice to me, of course he can have an extension of time." LBA members see each other more as people and colleagues and recognize that we all have clients, positions, families, civic interests, feelings and personal lives.

How has involvement in the LBA impacted your career?

Selfishly, it has given me a little respectability and credibility. I'm not suggesting I would've looked like a scummy, ambulance-chasing personal injury attorney without it but the LBA sure helped. The LBA allowed me to present several CLEs where I was the clear expert in the room. Other lawyers then knew I was the expert in that topic.

What are some of your goals for your year as President of the LBA?

Fundraising. We've started construction to improve our Bar Center. It's going to look great. Once completed, I have zero doubt it will be a boon to the membership. It will be an excellent gathering place while we continue to get out of our Covid shells, and a financial benefit to the LBA's bottom line. I look forward to partnering with firms, individuals and outside organizations on a path to financially support this new face of the LBA.

I also look forward to completing our update of the bylaws for best practices. I am grateful for Sam Wardle's heavy efforts in this arena.

I look forward to working with Executive Director Kristen Miller and others to increase revenues for the LBA.

On a personal level, I look forward to dominating the pickleball court with Justin Key at next year's LBA pickleball tournament.

What are you most excited about as you begin your year as the LBA's leader?

I'm really excited about the ABA's mid-year conference taking place here in Louisville. I can't wait to show off my hometown.

What do you think are the LBA's greatest strengths? What are our biggest challenges?

The biggest challenge we face is the same as many other American organizations. Nationally, civic involvement is on the decline. This is also true among places of worship and with arts organizations. More member events should help this.

Our greatest strength, aside from our investment fund, is our members. We have a deep talent pool.

PERSONAL INTERESTS

Tell me more about your family. How did you meet your wife? What profession is she in? Do you have children?

My wife, Cassie Chambers Armstrong, and I got to know each other at a Wigs on Tap Fundraiser. My wife is an outrageously credentialed (Yale, Harvard Law, London School of Economics) and gorgeous powerhouse serving in our State Senate. Her service as a State Senator, tenure-track law professor at UofL and mom of two blows my mind daily. On occasion, she still finds time to draft responses to summary judgments and appellate briefs for me. She's a winner.

We have two awesome boys: four-year-old Cooper and three-year-old Millard. These guys are the best part of my day and are presently at maximum cuteness. At least for now, they believe that I am the world's best engineer because I put new batteries in toys. They also think I'm one of its strongest and funniest men. That'll change, but for now, it's great.

What do you like to do in your free time?

I play a lot of squash. Like most of us, turning 40 brought a renewed emphasis on health. Growing up, I was never an athlete. But I've always believed that I can be good at anything I spend time on. So, I played... A lot. Next thing I knew, I was winning tournaments. In the C leagues, mind you, and then on to Bs. But a win's a win.

What community organizations do you support or volunteer with? Why are they important to you?

The LBA is the focus of my efforts! How do you think I got to be President?! But I used to be really involved with Jefferson Memorial Forest and Actors Theatre. I also spent a lot of time with Give502. But after my wife started running for office, I found myself acting as cheerleader-in-chief for Cassie Chambers for Metro Council and then for State Senate. I've spent so much time in fundraising, people are concerned when I ask them to lunch.

What are some of your current hobbies or interests?

I've got three- and four-year-old boys so... Sleeping. It's amazing, I spend an amazing amount of time, between five to seven hours a day, just laying in my bed.

Seriously though, I read, a lot. In the last month I read "The Gambler" about the guy that built the MGM Grand, Michael Lewis' "Going Infinite" and Morgan House's "Same as Ever." Currently I'm really into the podcast "Pivot" with Kara Swisher and Professor Scott Galloway.

If you weren't an attorney, what other career path do you think you might have pursued?

That's tough. I never seriously considered doing anything else. But my dream job would be writing for "The Simpsons."

What's something not a lot of people know about you?

I raced slalom and giant slalom in college.

What's your favorite movie – and your favorite guilty pleasure movie?

The movie "Arthur" is the greatest movie ever made. Of course, I mean Orion's 1981 Dudley Moore picture, featuring music by Christopher Cross and Burt Bacharach. It has everything—comedy, romance, intrigue and redemption. I think that movie fits all the stages of Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey.

Are you a music fan? If so, what's your favorite performer or band?

LCD Soundsystem. No band is better live.

What is your favorite restaurant in Louisville?

I've gotta go with Buck's. Piano, dim lighting, the white flowers—everybody looks good in there. But, like any Louisvillian, my many favorites places that aren't around anymore: Asiatque, Café Metro, Thai Café and Lentinis. I still give directions describing landmarks.