

A. Dean Bennett, Partner, Holland and Hart LLP in Boise

By: Chris Langrill November 17, 2016 0



Decisions, decisions.

All of us make them. Some are simple: What should I buy at the store?

Others are a little more life-altering.

Dean Bennett had a big decision to make in 2000: Should he pursue a professional baseball career?

That was the year Bennett was drafted by the Oakland Athletics.

After some soul-searching, Bennett chose a different route. He went to college and played baseball – first at Blue Mountain Community College in Oregon and later at Vanderbilt – and began on his path to law school.

Not that the idea of pitching for the Athletics wasn't tempting.

"It was," Bennett says. "Playing SEC baseball was pretty competitive and fun, too. But, in childhood, you have a dream and then you have an opportunity to pursue it. I grew up in the Bay Area as a kid, so the Oakland Athletics

were my team. ... It was just one of those fun things. I didn't end up going to play, but I can tell my kids that I have that contract sitting in my closet somewhere."

In the long run, Bennett knows he made the right decision (and shoulder surgery during his junior year of college helped cement it).

Today, Bennett is a partner the Boise office of Holland and Hart. He's also happily married with three young children.

"It all turned out the way I was hoping it would," says Bennett, whose practice focuses on commercial and employment litigation. "Not that there weren't a lot of long days and long nights, but it worked out pretty well."

Indeed.

In January, Bennett was named one of the youngest partners in the Boise office of Holland and Hart. He says that being named a leader of a firm with 15 offices and over 500 attorneys is one of his greatest professional achievements.

"It wasn't something that came easily," says Bennett, who also became the president of the Downtown Business Association this year. "It was a long process to get through it, but I was very grateful."

Those who know Bennett likely weren't surprised to see him reach the professional milestone. Bennett says his personal philosophy is that any goal is attainable if you are willing to out-prepare and outwork everyone else.

One of the goals in his personal life is to be the best parent he can be. He admits that can be difficult for he and his wife, Shelley.

"We're constantly balancing her professional life and mine," Bennett says. "We thought we were going to have one kid. Then we decided to have two, and we had twins. So we had three kids under the age of 2. There were a lot of 12-hour days after three hours of sleep."

Now the Bennetts have a son who is 6 years old and twins who are 4 years old – and very active.

"We throw a lot of things and we kick a lot of things," he says with a chuckle. "We do everything from golf to snow skiing, to football to basketball, baseball.

"It's only going to get worse, but my wife and I are a good team."

Ah, yes. The team concept. That's something that Bennett says carries over to his professional life.

"It's not all glitz and glamour and TV lawyering," Bennett says. "There's lots of hard work. There's lots of phone calls, there's lots of writing and that kind of stuff."

But he says the most satisfying part of his job is when he feels like he and his client have built a partnership – a team, if you will.

"It's fun when you have a good relationship with someone ... and you feel like you're part of the team," Bennett says. "The fun times for me are when the competitive side comes out: the depositions, the trial work, the hearings ... when you're putting yourself up against the other guy.

"It can be a little bit of an adrenaline rush for a washed-up athlete."

To view photos from the 2016 Leaders in Law networking reception and awards event Nov. 17, 2016, visit <http://www.idahobusinessreview.smugmug.com/>.

ABOUT CHRIS LANGRILL

