

Neal Bookspan

A Pragmatic Practice

By Elizabeth Morse

With a strong background in business, Jaburg Wilk shareholder Neal Bookspan is pragmatic when it comes to his own practice and when it comes to finding the right solutions for his clients. His approach to helping Arizona businesses is predicated on his original interest in business.

“I look at business owners and see beyond the initial question or problem,” he says. “Often, we’re able to deal with legal risks in addition to those that first brought them to see me. I enjoy working with clients long term, while they grow and find success in the Arizona business community.”

It was business that brought the law to Bookspan. He was enrolled in a business undergraduate program at the University of Arizona, which required a business law credit. He was immediately hooked by the business law class and resolved to pursue his Juris Doctor after graduation.

While he applies the lessons of law school to his practice every day, Bookspan draws on his early education in business management and his vast experience working with and advising businesses when working with clients.

“The biggest thing you have to understand when the law intersects with business,” he says, “is that you’re not working in a vacuum. The legal solutions need to work with the company’s big picture and move the whole company in the right direction. It can’t work otherwise.”

Since graduating from Drake University School of Law in 1992, Bookspan has been unable to confine his practice to one specific area of the law. Instead, he maintains a general practice divided between business law, commercial litigation, construction litigation and bankruptcy.

“It keeps me on my toes,” he says. “Every day brings new challenges and I thrive on the ability to switch between the different areas. They each bring a unique aspect to my daily work.”

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For his business clients, Bookspan focuses on solving their legal issues without litigation, but, when necessary, he has substantial experience advocating on behalf of his clients in court. He has been rewarded over the years with having worked with many successful Arizona companies.

“The majority of my practice is to help businesses and business owners – mainly based in Arizona – manage their legal risks,” he says. “The second part of my practice is to help businesses settle disputes and litigation, which is an extension of the first part.”

With his construction clients, Bookspan primarily handles contract-related disputes and mechanic’s liens issues, as well as assisting contractors with contract review and project issues. His bankruptcy practice is focused on creditor’s rights representation and adversary proceeding litigation, mainly non-dischargeability proceedings.

“I learned a lot about bankruptcy law first from the Honorable James M. Marlar, who I worked with in private practice before he became a judge, and then from the Honorable Robert G. Mooreman while serving as his law clerk,” he says. “The experience of working for each of them has led me to successfully represent hundreds of clients I have worked with over the years.” Marlar taught him about private practice, including about law firm finances and why it is important to be friendly and professional with everyone you deal with, from janitors to judges. Mooreman invited Bookspan to be actively involved in and analyze legal issues and situations throughout his clerkship.

“Watching the success and failure of the attorneys taught me a lot,” he says. “I soaked in as much knowledge as I could.”

Before joining Jaburg Wilk, Bookspan gained experience from both large and small firms. What drew him to Jaburg? “It was the firm’s mid-size structure and how well it was managed,” he says. “It has given me an opportunity to work with good lawyers and watch the firm grow steadily and organically. At the same time, I have the flexibility to maintain a life at home. I’ve spent just under half my career here and I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

Since joining the firm, Bookspan has seen Jaburg undergo positive growth both in the number of practicing attorneys and in the number of practice areas available to clients.

Three years ago, the firm implemented a campaign to encourage positive professional growth within the firm referred to as The JW Way, which consists of 21 fundamentals that promote a healthy office culture. Many of the fundamentals listed incorporate basic ethical conduct, such as delivering outstanding legal advice, being passionate about the client experience, walking in your clients’ shoes, managing expectations, honoring commitments and much more. Since the implementation of The JW Way, Bookspan says it has had an incredibly positive effect on the office culture.

“There was an attorney that once told me, ‘Happy clients will pay the bill,’” Bookspan says. “But at Jaburg Wilk, we’re not a one-size-fits-all. Each client and case is unique and we do our best to ensure we provide the best representation, service and advice as required to fully satisfy our clients within their means. One of the 21 fundamentals in The JW Way is to act with integrity.

“Good people, good attorneys,” he continues. “Both myself and the firm are constantly looking for ways to do good work within the client’s ability to pay





At a Glance

Jaburg Wilk

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Practice Areas

Business Litigation

Construction Law

Corporate Transactions

Creditor's Rights and

Bankruptcy Litigation

Education

Juris Doctor with Honors, Drake

University School of Law, 1992

Bachelor of Science in Business

Administration, University of Arizona,

1989

Awards & Honors

Martindale-Hubbell AV-Preeminent Rated
Business Organizations, Best Lawyers in

America, 2016-2017

Southwest Super Lawyer, 2013-2016

Professional Memberships

American Bankruptcy Institute, Member
Arizona State Bar – Bankruptcy Section,
Executive Council

Maricopa County Bar, Member

Turnaround Management Association,
Member

Community Involvement

Social Venture Partners - Fast Pitch,
Mentor, 2014-2017

Seed Spot – Demo Day, Mentor, 2016

Hobbies

Hiking

Music

Favorite Quote

“Hardships often prepare ordinary people
for an extraordinary destiny.”

– *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*



for the service. The main question we ask at the beginning of each case that is presented before us is, ‘How do we get clients to the best result possible in their given circumstance?’”

Outside of the office, Bookspan spends his time hiking, enjoying live music and spending time with his wife and four children. He notes that all of his children received Bookspan’s love for music and all but the youngest are musicians.

Bookspan enjoys redirecting his energy into the business aspect of things. He volunteers for Social Venture Partners (SVP) as a Fast Pitch mentor. SVP’s Fast Pitch event is where innovative and high-impact nonprofit organizations undergo a free two-month communications training program working with other professionals. At the event, they present a three-minute pitch on their nonprofit organization.

The event equips nonprofit leaders with the skills to effectively communicate their story and network with other business and community leaders to help make a bigger impact with their organization. This year marks Bookspan’s fourth year as a mentor.

“Mentoring for Social Venture Partner’s Fast Pitch event is a way to give back and allows me to delve into the business aspect of my career,” Bookspan says.

Bookspan is looking to continue his practice and his work with Jaburg Wilk with no plans of stopping anytime soon.

“I want to be thought of as a valued and trusted adviser by my clients,” he says. “I plan to help my firm continue to build on its success through my work with clients, people within the firm and in the community.”