

PERSONAL & PRACTICE:

# Faegre Baker Daniels Attorney Profiles

## Jacob Bylund

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[jacob.bylund@FaegreBD.com](mailto:jacob.bylund@FaegreBD.com) ▼ T: +1 515 447 4708

## PRACTICE:

### WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO PRACTICE LAW?

- ▶ I was first exposed to the law as a child, through mock trial. The lawyer from my hometown (there was one lawyer, with a country practice) assisted our mock trial team. The experience left an impression on me. I was interested in the law moving forward into college. In college, my girlfriend (now wife) suggested that I switch undergraduate majors, from engineering to political science, and go to law school. I changed majors the next day. Ultimately, the needs of the practice suited my interests and skills.

### WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST CLIENT ACHIEVEMENT?

- ▶ My greatest client achievements have come with the return of jury verdicts. We work hard on every case and nearly all of them are resolved, through motion practice or settlement, short of trial. Clients rely upon us to evaluate all available information and make an assessment as to whether or not a matter should be taken to trial. When a client makes a decision to progress to trial, with our team as counsel, the client is placing a great deal of trust and confidence in the team. When a verdict is returned and the effort has been successful, there is no greater client-related achievement.

### IN WHAT AREA WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN MORE OR IMPROVE?

- ▶ I would like to increase the use of technology throughout the litigation and trial process. This includes decreasing the use of paper files, including paper deposition and trial exhibits, increasing the use of video technology for depositions and hearings to cut down on travel costs, and increasing the use of technology in the courtroom. I believe that advances in technology will continue to make the litigation process more efficient, while at the same time making it easier for lawyers to develop a truly national practice from any location.

### WHICH OF YOUR COLLEAGUES DO YOU ADMIRE MOST?

- ▶ When I started with the firm, there were three senior partners in the Des Moines office. They were and are very different, with unique strengths, management styles and approaches to the practice of law. I try not to follow exactly in the footsteps of any of them, but instead try to borrow from each of them.

### WHAT DO YOU MOST ENJOY ABOUT WORKING AT FAEGRE BAKER DANIELS?

- ▶ The folks I work with. The firm has great attorneys, professionals and staff. In addition to delivering excellent client service, they are great folks to work with. I am regularly impressed with the work product of our associates in particular; they are critical to the overall effort.

### WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU COULD CHANGE ABOUT THE LEGAL INDUSTRY?

- ▶ The profession needs to continue its efforts to improve efficiency in the litigation process. Some of the inefficiency is driven by structural issues, like rules that unnecessarily complicate certain aspects of the practice or allow for too much time for the presentation of issues to the court for resolution. Some of the inefficiency is driven by lawyers who would prefer to argue about every point (or simply don't know any better), as opposed to resolving minor issues and moving on to the substance of the dispute and its resolution. I prefer to chalk the field and begin the fight, rather than argue about issues that don't ultimately matter.

## PRACTICE:

### WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST CHALLENGING ABOUT YOUR AREA OF FOCUS?

- ▶ Litigation and trial practice can be contentious and stressful. It is helpful to focus on the long term and not focus on daily (hourly) peaks and valleys. Managing the stress of the practice, while trying to separate professional and personal life, is the most challenging aspect of my practice. I don't always maintain an appropriate work-life balance, which is something I must continue to work on.

### WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST REWARDING ABOUT YOUR AREA OF FOCUS?

- ▶ I enjoy working with the client to develop a long-term strategy and then executing on the strategy, adjusting as needed as we go forward. Most of the cases that I work on present unique issues, meaning we must craft a strategy unique to the case. We have to think multiple moves ahead, like playing chess. When you are then able to execute on the plan and everything comes together, it is very rewarding.

### HOW HAS YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON LAW CHANGED OVER THE YEARS?

- ▶ When I first started, I did not fully appreciate how each part of the litigation process fit together. Only after taking several cases through trial and appeal did I more fully understand how small steps at each point in the process can materially impact the final outcome. At the same time, I came to realize that some things that seem important at the time, like many discovery disputes, can have little or no impact on the ultimate outcome.

### WHAT IS THE BIGGEST LESSON YOU'VE LEARNED?

- ▶ Follow the golden rule. If you would object to opposing counsel behaving in a certain way, don't behave in that way yourself. Even if opposing counsel engages in improper behavior, resist the urge to deviate from the golden rule. It is in those situations, with a difficult opposing counsel, that it is most important to make sure your behavior is appropriate and consistent with your values and approach to the practice.

### IF YOU COULD CHANGE YOUR AREA OF FOCUS, WHAT WOULD YOU SWITCH TO AND WHY?

- ▶ I would not change my area of focus. I am doing exactly what I should be doing, what I am most suited for and what I am most interested in.

### WHAT IS THE NEXT BIG PROJECT YOU'D LIKE TO TACKLE?

- ▶ I want to focus on the professional development of my team, while at the same time continuing to build my own practice. I am interested in building — building my own practice, building a bigger team and fostering the professional development of my team members.