

KTalks



Welcome to KTalks. This series reaches out to leaders in the business and legal communities with five questions to seek their insight on matters ranging from career paths, diversity, and mentoring, to work/life balance.

Randy Eaddy is President and CEO of [The Arts Council of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County](#) – the oldest arts council in the country with an annual budget of approximately \$3.5 million. For over 25 years, Randy was an attorney at Kilpatrick Townsend where he focused his practice on securities and capital formation transactions, disclosure compliance, mergers and acquisitions, strategic business alliances and corporate governance advice in complex situations. He also worked frequently with the firm’s Triad-based Investment Management Team on complex governance and mergers & acquisitions matters. Randy received his undergraduate degree from Furman University and then attended Harvard Law School, where he was an editor of the *Harvard Law Review*. He retired from Kilpatrick Townsend in 2018.

This is part two of a two-part conversation with Randy. For part one, please click [here](#).

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What is the biggest change that you have seen in the practice of law since you graduated law school?

There have been many significant changes since 1979, but the most impactful has been the practice of law being approached primarily as a “business”. The implications of that have been widespread and pervasive. In my opinion, a lot of it has not been positive for the profession.

What is the best non-legal attribute that you see in the most successful lawyers?

Thinking and speaking clearly about complex situations, where competing issues or ideas warrant respectful consideration and analysis, even when they are intensely disagreeable.

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Who had the greatest influence in your legal career that helped propel your career?

Several people have influenced me in substantial ways, but my earliest and best mentor was Mike Trotter. But for Mike, I probably would have remained in Boston after law school. Mike taught me many lessons that continue to guide me to this very day, including, most significantly, how to work for and with people with whom I disagree and the importance of meaningful civic engagements while pursuing my professional career.

Is there something you do in your personal life that contributes to your professional success?

Playing golf taught me lessons about understanding people, including how they react to stress, success, and failure or disappointment. You can learn a lot about the true measure of a person by observing how he or she handles the vicissitudes of a round of golf, both when experienced by him or her and by others in the playing group. That helps in assessing people in other contexts, including one’s business or professional relationships.

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What inspired your legal career?

David Halberstam’s book, [The Best and the Brightest](#), which was recommended to me by my intrepid college advisor and mentor, Dr. Donald Aiesi. I was primarily interested in government service back then, and thought my career would be in that arena. I was struck by the number of high profile government officials featured in that book who had law degrees. So, I went to law school, and the rest followed from there, albeit not on the initially contemplated government-service career path.