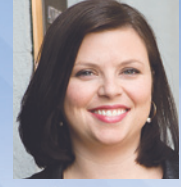




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DAILY REPORT



40 LEGAL RISING STARS TO WATCH under Forty



BRANDON PEAK

Partner, Butler Wooten Cheeley & Peak



JOHN DISNEY

BRANDON PEAK | 35

Partner, Butler Wooten Cheeley & Peak

The Citadel, business administration, 2001

Walter F. George School of Law, Mercer University, 2004

PLAINTIFFS LAWYER Brandon Peak says his job is all about solving problems and helping people.

Peak joined his firm, then Butler Wooten and Fryhofer, in 2006.

Since then, Peak has racked up several big wins, including a \$2.6 million verdict in Troup County last year for a vehicle crash case. Last month, the firm changed its name, adding Peak as a name partner, with the retirement of George Fryhofer III and welcoming back Robert Cheeley.

“The greatest feeling for any lawyer,” says Peak, “is to know that you’ve worked your hardest and at the conclusion of the case your client is happy and thankful and appreciative. You know what you’ve done is going to help them.”

Joel Wooten, managing partner at Butler Wooten Cheeley & Peak, says Peak has an unwavering work ethic. “Brandon is one of the brightest, most hard-working and motivated lawyers I know,” says Wooten, adding, “of any age.”

One of Peak’s most memorable cases involved a woman who was raising her young niece who had some physical challenges requiring a lot of medical attention. The woman died while she and the child were being transported in a nonemergency vehicle.

Peak says being able to help the child was a defining moment for him. “You know what kind of person someone is when they take a child who has some challenges and raise that child as their own. It’s never a perfect ending,” he says, “but you hope through a case you can bring some closure to the family, help the people who need help and then prevent

the thing from happening again.”

Wooten envisions Peak working on bigger cases and trying more cases. “He does such a good job of putting his cases together ... that, fortunately for his clients but sometimes unfortunately for Brandon, he doesn’t get to try that many cases,” says Wooten. It is not uncommon for Peak’s cases to settle. “There are very few issues left by the time trial rolls around,” Wooten says.

Outside the courtroom, Peak is involved with the community, his church and his family. Peak met his wife, Brooke, in law school, and they have four children under the age of 6. “Life is pretty busy,” Peak says.

Chris Clark, managing partner at Clark & Smith Law Firm in Macon, says Peak has three things you really need to be successful: “One, he’s bright. Two, he works very hard and, three, he is a highly ethical, professional person.”

Peak’s success will only continue to grow, says Clark, with Peak taking on the most difficult and sophisticated cases at the firm. “Whatever he chooses to do, whatever he’s given to do, he’s going to do it well,” Clark says.

Peak downplays the accolades, claiming his skills aren’t unique. “I just try to work as hard as I can and treat people like I would want to be treated if I were a client,” he says. “I really think that there’s no complex recipe. That’s been it.”

—Mary Helen Martin