



Profile on K Whitner

K Whitner is a man with many hats. In addition to his role as a leading Litigation Partner in the Firm's Atlanta office, K also co-chairs the Diversity Council with Greg Nitzkowski and chairs the local Atlanta Recruiting and Litigation Departments. We recently spoke with K about why he chose a career in the law, his path to partnership, and what drove him to get involved in his various committee roles.

Growing up, K always knew he wanted to be a lawyer but was only familiar with what was shown in movies and on TV shows; so, being a lawyer only meant being a trial lawyer. After completing his undergraduate degree from Georgetown University, K went to Yale Law, where he got his JD. He accepted summer associate positions with the Haynesworth firm in Greenville, South Carolina and then Sutherland in Atlanta. Upon graduation, K was faced with a difficult decision: whether he should accept a permanent position with Sutherland or accept an offer from Paul Hastings. K ultimately chose Sutherland, which he now reflects back on noting "[Paul Hastings] is where [he] should have been all along."

Today, K recalls what initially drew him to Paul Hastings, stating "Paul Hastings allows people the opportunity to come here with a clean slate and create their own destiny." When K started working for Paul Hastings, he certainly took this idea to heart. With his hands in different businesses – including: a recording studio, a record label and a logistics company – K was not your typical lawyer. The Firm's steadfast support of his outside endeavors kept him feeling fulfilled and satisfied. He notes, "There is no 'blueprint' for being a partner at Paul Hastings," which enabled him to continue pursuing his outside interests while working toward partnership. He has since stepped back from his former businesses but applies lessons he learned to his legal practice and client interactions.

In his role as co-chair of the Diversity Council, K is responsible for ensuring Paul Hastings continues to push the needle in diversity. Whether this applies to unique ways of thinking about recruiting to new ideas for associate development, K enjoys being able to apply his experience from his other committee roles to helping talent at the Firm. K encourages both recruits and young associates alike to "forge their own paths" because "there's no one way to be successful at this firm," noting the significance this has had on his career.

As the husband of a fellow lawyer, and the father of two, K says he is driven by his goal of simply being the best that he can be. Whether in the workplace or at home, K strives to "maximize [himself] in everything." K admits that, despite all of the long hours, sharing a profession with his wife has been very rewarding. Appreciating the pressures that come with being a lawyer and understanding the time commitments that inevitably follow is something they share.

When it comes to advice, K is chock full of it. He is a strong advocate for individuality and doing what is unique to one's own wants and needs. K urges recruits and young associates to take control of their careers, and make decisions that are dependent upon their personal goals. In order to do so, recruits and young associates must look internally for their successes, not externally. The ultimate goal, K says, is maximizing themselves through their work. Along these lines, K's tip for a satisfying career is to "be the best lawyer you

individually can be, and the results and success will follow." To that end, K quotes the legendary John Wooden, "Success is peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you made the effort to become the best of which you are capable."

Although the path to partnership is not an easy one, K is satisfied with where he's gone so far. Plus, working at a Firm that not only accepts individuality but encourages it is something that K values highly. The PH work environment has enabled K to reach his full potential. What's the best proof of K's satisfaction? K confesses, "I don't know that I would still be practicing law had I not been at Paul Hastings."