

# Rising Star - Michael J. Faehner

Most of us in the legal community know Michael Faehner as the “Master of Disaster” due to his work with the Florida Hurricanes in 2004 and as a charitable consultant during Hurricane Katrina Relief for several of the states that were impacted. We simply know him as “that great tax attorney” that we see in court assisting clients (and judges alike) with cases. Perhaps we know him as the guy in shorts helping clean up after the Clearwater Bar Annual Oyster Roast, but all of these are only single snapshots of what the Honorable William Van Nortwick, Jr. recently said of the “Oldest Young Lawyer I know.” The real Michael Faehner, for those of us lucky enough to know him well, is a wonderful mix of great intellect, great compassion, a great sense of duty and honor, and a surprisingly great sense of fun.

Michael was born in Manhasset, New York and raised on Long Island. He graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 1991 with a Bachelors of Business Administration along with a Bachelors of Arts in History. During his breaks from Notre Dame, Michael worked for a specialist firm on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. He attended Valparaiso University School of Law, graduating with multiple honors in 1994. Michael passed the bar in 1994 and has been a practicing attorney since then. In 2005, he graduated from the University of Florida School of Law with an LLM in taxation.

Michael is past president of the Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division (the youngest one ever) and also served on the Florida Bar Board of Governors and its executive committee (2003-2005).



Michael previously represented the 6th Judicial Circuit of the Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division Board of Governors (1998-2003) before being elected the board's President. He presently serves as Chair of the Florida Bar's Voluntary Bar Association Committee, the vice chairman of the Florida Bar's Standing Committee on Advertising and the Florida Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism. He also serves on the board of directors of the Florida Bar Foundation which oversees the Florida's Interest on Trust Accounts (IOTA) program and funds programs which help to expand and improve representation and advocacy on behalf of low-income persons in civil action matters and improve the fair and effective administration of justice. Previously, he has served on the Florida Bar Board of Continuing Legal Education Committee, Florida Bar Student Education Student Admissions Committee, Florida Bar Long Range Planning Committee, and the Florida Law Related Education Committee.

When asked what drives him, Michael answered, “I feel I have a moral and religious commitment to give back to the community.” Michael says that this commitment started in elementary school with club drives and continued through junior and high school where he volunteered at elder homes and for church activities. He credits his attendance at Notre Dame as a turning point for him and states that it was “good to be around an environment where community service is an integral part of life.” While attending Notre Dame, Michael tutored under-privileged children and worked with the Homeless in South Bend, Indiana.

Michael is the past president of the Clearwater Bar Association (2002-2003) where he was its youngest president ever along with being past president of the Clearwater Bar Association Young Lawyers Division (1996-1998). In addition, he is a 2002 graduate of Leadership Pinellas, 2002 Tampa Bay Review's 40 Under 40 for the Tampa Bay area, and a 2003 graduate of the Pinellas County Sheriff Community Policing Institute.

Michael's previous employment includes being senior associate at the law firm of McFarland, Gould, Lyons, Sullivan and Hogan, the law firm of Fisher & Sauls and at Raymond James Trust as a member of their Family Office division before going out as a solo practice. He manages and runs his own law firm where he is the managing member for M. Faehner, Esq., LLC where he practices in the areas of tax, contract law, estate planning, probate, business/corporate consulting, civil litigation and tax controversy work.

He sits on the board of directors for Community Law Program as the chair

of its Governance Committee and St. Anthony's Hospital Foundation. He currently volunteers for several committees for the Suncoast YMCA, Pinellas Education Foundation, the Hospice of the Florida Suncoast, RCS, Morton Plant Foundation, All Children's Hospital, and St. Petersburg College Foundation. His previous board service included serving on the boards for Leadership Pinellas and the SPCA. He also volunteers his time to give talks on assorted tax and charitable issues to the community.

Michael is a member of both the Clearwater Bar Association and the St. Petersburg Bar Association, where he recently received the "Rocking Chair Award" from the SPBA YLD when

he served as co-chair of the SPBA's Probate Section. He also presently serves as treasurer of the Clearwater Bar Association. He was also recipient of the 2005 Florida Law Related Education Association Attorney of the Year and received a special Florida Supreme Court Special Citation for his work with Hurricane Disaster Relief. In Michael's "spare" time, he serves as an adjunct professor at St. Petersburg College in its four year bachelor program in the College of Policy and Legal Studies where he teaches Ethics, Comparative Law and Commercial Transactions. He is on his second term serving as the president of the University of Notre Dame Club for Greater Tampa Bay Area.

Few attorneys in this community could claim to have the wide range of knowledge and experience as Michael does. At the recent Community Law Awards Dinner, he not only personally escorted both keynote speakers to and from the event, but was recognized by Adele Stone and Judge Van Nortwick in their respective speeches regarding his service to the Florida Bar. It would have been easy to get quotes from others about how Michael has excelled at such a young age, but clearly Michael himself sums it up best by simply saying, "I wish more lawyers would see pro bono [work] as a duty." Well said Michael: our hats are off to you.

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