Introduction

Everybody is always marketing. But most lawyers have no idea how to sell anything. They don't teach salesmanship in law school.
– Judge Griffin Bell

If I had to sum up why I do what I do, I'd turn to these words from Judge Griffin Bell. As a business development coach, I work with many lawyers on client development, precisely because they have not been taught how to, yet they are expected to do so to succeed in their careers.

It was during my coaching work with a law firm in Alabama that I first had the idea for this book. I was working with Jack Miller, who hired me to coach the attorneys in his firm, Miller Hamilton Snider & Odum. (This firm recently combined with Jones Walker.)

While I worked with Mr. Miller's firm, I was able to spend a lot of time with him. He shared with me the way he founded the firm, how he built up his client base and his philosophy on leadership and client development. I was fascinated by his stories and the wisdom he shared.

When I met him, Mr. Miller was battling cancer. He has now survived a second bout of cancer and is in remission. It occurred to me that if his stories were not preserved, we'd be in danger of losing the benefits of that wisdom.

Around this time, I was sitting at an Atlanta Legal Aid Society board meeting, pondering how I could make an additional contribution to this worthy organization, other than just by writing a check. I thought about a business associate, Bob Littell, who had co-authored a book called PowerNetWeaving. He was donating the royalties from that book to Junior Achievement.

So the idea hit me – I would write a book to memorialize the great leaders of the legal community. I could preserve their seasoned advice so that others could be inspired by their actions and their wisdom. And a majority of the profits would go to benefit Atlanta Legal Aid's endowment fund.

So how to select the people to profile? I asked many attorneys, judges, and other leaders in Atlanta and Georgia who they thought were the best of the best. We came up with a list of ten people. I am so thankful to all ten of these people who gave so generously of their time and wisdom for this book.

It has been my great privilege to visit with them over the past six months and hear their tales of success, but also learn about the struggles that they faced during their careers. I strolled through the beautiful gardens at Paul Webb's cabin in Helen, Georgia, ate fudge cake with Bobby Lee Cook at his favorite diner in Summerville, peeked at Clay Long's balcony to see the nests of the peregrine falcons that roost there every year and sat spellbound with former Governor Carl Sanders as he expounded on decades of Atlanta history. Emmet Bondurant shared his story of how he ended up arguing a case before the U.S. Supreme Court when he was just twenty-six years of age.

Miles Alexander entertained me with stories of product liability cases, Chilton Varner intrigued me with her assertion that being a trial lawyer is like playing a three-dimensional chess game, Frank Love told me about playing a round of golf with Mickey Rooney and Richard

Sinkfield shared with us an important lesson he learned accidentally as an associate barely out of law school that he passes down to younger attorneys.

Although I was unable to meet with Judge Bell in person, I was able to correspond with him about his contribution and am so very pleased and honored that he was willing to share from his decades of experience.

We videotaped the rest of these interviews, and excerpts of each one are found in the accompanying DVD included in the back of the book. It was especially important to me to preserve their words of wisdom in their own voices, and in some cases to preserve the lovely Southern accent you don't hear too much anymore.

It's true that times are very different now from the days when most started their careers. Although they worked very long hours, there were no "billable hours" back then; you just did the job until it was done. And of course there were no cell phones, fax machines, computers or even voicemail to facilitate communication. But attorneys then found their own ways. Judge Bell talks about his early days in Savannah when all the lawyers would gather at a local saloon every day at eleven in the morning to discuss and settle cases.

In the days of specialization, many of these attorneys started out handling murder cases, divorces and adoptions – whatever kinds of cases they were handed. And of course, compensation has changed a bit: When Paul Webb first moved to Atlanta and interviewed for jobs, the going rate for a lawyer was $100 a month.

Although many things have changed, there is still so much wisdom to be gleaned from the older members of the bar, and so many of their truths are just as applicable today as they were many years ago.

As you may expect, many of the ten lawyers had several things in common. Several of them had attended law school at Harvard, and many had served courageously in World War II. More than a few got involved in politics; we have a former governor and a U.S. attorney general in the group. There were several from small towns such as Lyerly, Georgia and Demopolis, Alabama. There were a few who had considered other careers - college professor or minister - when they were young. And of course, many were involved with Atlanta Legal Aid, with Emmet Bondurant and Paul Webb serving terms as president.

But one thing they all shared was a dedication to and a passion for the law. Many expressed the feeling that it is a privilege to be a lawyer. "There is not a day goes by that I don't look in the mirror and thank God I'm a lawyer," said Mr. Webb.

It is with a sense of great privilege that I present you with their stories in my book, *Raising the Bar: Legendary Rainmakers Share Their Business Development Secrets*.

This book is for attorneys and any others who are inspired by the stories of actual people and their lives, and what made them successful. After listening to all of these people and the lessons they impart, I believe that anyone in professional service careers can learn from these great leaders who have accomplished so much.

I hope that you enjoy reading their stories and hearing highlights of their interviews (on the accompanying DVD), and feel the same sense of inspiration and admiration as I did.

– Robin M. Hensley