

Cracker Jax Blog

Spotlight: Brenda Ezell

By Cam Brown

Brenda Ezell is a Jacksonville real estate attorney who owns her own law firm and was named this year by the Business Journal as one of Jacksonville's most influential women.

Q: You are proud to be from Detroit. Tell us why?

Detroit is a city full with people who know hard work and perseverance and how to overcome tough times. The new Chrysler commercials sum up what we're made of so well! Also, so much of this country's history and the fiber of the nation is centered around Detroit as the Motor City.

I grew up visiting the Henry Ford Museum, the Detroit Museums (which are amazing), and attending concerts in "Joe Louis" Arena, to name a few of the amazing things there are to do in Detroit. In addition to being the world's automotive capital, there is an extremely broad wealth of talent that comes from Detroit, from Aretha Franklin to artists from Motown, Bob Seger, Madonna, Kiss, Kid Rock and Eminem, just to name a few.

Q: Tell us about your Army service. Is that what made you decide to become a lawyer?

I joined the Army primarily for college money through the GI Bill. My original career goal was to be an optometrist, but in my last year of high school, I took a physiology and anatomy class that caused me to reconsider my career choice.

When I joined the Army after 2 years of college, I received training as a legal specialist and was assigned to work for Army JAG. I learned there that law would be a suitable career for me and how that career could help me impact the lives of others. The other part of my Army service was not so stellar. I was more of a Private Benjamin than I would like to admit (even though I was very good with the weapons!

Q: Why real estate law?

I love math and geometry so the real estate practice area, which requires analysis of geometric boundaries -- as well as the puzzle that can be associated with the chain of title to property -- was fascinating to me. It was also less objectionable than tax law since I was just coming off of nearly 7 years with the IRS.

Q: Best gift you ever gave?

I surprised my husband with a brand new truck (that he signed for unknowingly). I took it to his job and parked it in the place of his old car. Needless to say, I received several proposals from his co-workers. After thinking more about this, even better is the CD's I made for him last Valentine's Day that express my love and commitment.

Q. First job?

I had a paper route for the Detroit News when I was 12.

Q. Claim to fame in high school.

I had such a crush on Prince in high school, that by the time I graduated, my nickname was “Ms. Prince”.

Q. How did you meet your husband?

I was at a bar with my cousin from Detroit who I had to entertain while she was visiting Jax. I didn't want to go, but she was bored to death so I took her to a club called Jazzco. She met his best friend there and they introduced me to Terrell. We have been together since that night more than 20 years ago.

Q: Tell us about your wedding.

We didn't have a traditional wedding. On a Friday, December 13th, we eloped without telling a soul. We found a person in the phone book who does wedding ceremonies so we went to her home off Arlington Expressway where she performed what was supposed to be a brief ceremony but which turned out to be not so brief because I laughed through the entire thing after seeing her toes sticking out from under her robe. She was not amused and asked whether we were really ready for marriage. I should find her.

Q: Best Gator story.

Taking a picture of my baby Britney with Albert when he visited the Baby Gator Child Development Center on campus. She NEVER liked to take pictures with caricatures, but she did this time.

Q: Besides your children, what are you most proud of?

Starting my own law firm.

Q: Most funny or embarrassing moment?

Most funny/embarrassing moment was when I was in Army basic training on field ops and I didn't realize that you shouldn't wash up with baby wipes in the “jungle”. I was the laughing stock for weeks. I was clean though, even with the swarm of yellow jackets and other various creatures surrounding me.

Q: Greatest simple pleasure?

Football on Saturdays and Sundays for about 16 weeks each year.

Q: Is there anything you'd like to add?

This was hard!