



Certification Matters

Hollye and Carson Fisk: First Father-Son Board Certified Construction Law Attorneys



The first class of Construction Law Board Certified attorneys will be sworn in on Feb. 10, 2017, and among them are two attorneys that share more than the same Board Certification.

Hollye Fisk, who works for Fisk Alexander, P.C., is father to R. Carson Fisk of Andrew Myers P.C. Their focuses are different: Carson's clients are more contractor-based while Hollye represents design professionals, which certainly makes for interesting conversations over the holiday dinner table.



Hollye Fisk



Carson Fisk

Although both Hollye and Carson are now officially Board Certified in Construction Law, they reached their specialist area in different ways.

Having collaborated on a few cases in the past together, Hollye has much to be proud of Carson. In addition to being part of Construction Law's inaugural class, Carson led the effort, alongside Journeyman Construction Inc. attorney Jason Spencer, in building TBLS' newest specialty area.

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Hollye received his bachelor's degree in architecture from the University of Texas at Austin in 1970. As the Texas economy was booming at the time, his goal was to get a law degree and then become a real estate developer. But after graduating from law school at the University of Texas at Austin in 1972, the construction industry tanked and developers were going bankrupt. As a result, Hollye went back to practice architecture for six years but then got more interested in the legal aspects of architecture. Being a licensed attorney and registered architect, Hollye has worked exclusively to provide architects and engineers with top quality legal representation for the last 30 years.

Carson took a different route. After growing up around lawyers, becoming one himself seemed only natural. He received his bachelor's degree in anthropology at Texas Tech University in 2001 and received his law degree from the University of Texas at Austin in 2003. He asked his father what high-quality firms he suggested clerking at during law school, the guidance he got was heavily weighted on the construction side. Upon graduating, he stayed in Austin within the industry he knew all his life.

Carson knew that he eventually wanted to get specialized, but there wasn't an area that TBLS offered at the time that matched Carson's interests. "I was intrigued by the idea of specialization, but there wasn't a fit," he says. He soon realized that there was a need for Construction Law to be added as a specialty and he wasn't the only one. His father witnessed an industry change as the number of participants at the Annual Construction



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Scarlett Fisk being carried by her father Carson

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Law Conference of Texas grew from 40 to 700 over the years. The industry has become “highly competitive,” and having Board Certification in Construction Law helps one to market oneself as an expert in the field, Hollye notes.

Though not directly involved, Hollye counseled Carson throughout the specialization approval journey. Once exam time came, they both thought that young attorneys would be the majority in taking the test. Much to their surprise though, they discovered that Hollye wasn’t the only seasoned attorney to seek specialization. Carson was happy to report that “the interest was universal.”



Hollye’s second son on the far right, David Fisk, is also an attorney.

When asked why after more than 30 years of practicing Hollye felt the need to take a test to legitimize what he already knew, he claimed it was a “pride issue.” It was about the “prestige” and it was an excellent “client selling-point.” “Being Board Certified is absolutely essential if you want to have credibility,” Hollye comments.

As for the future of the specialization, Carson will remain the Vice Chair of the TBLS Construction Law Advisory Commission for “as long as they let me,” he confirms, along with his pride for the strong foundation that has already been set. He believes that a Board Certification in Construction Law creates a high standard of expectations for clients and the firm by association. It tells the client, “this is what I do,” and by the increasing numbers of applicants, the specialization is also a huge pull for lawyers themselves. “It’s been a rewarding experience,” Carson says. Like his father before him, Carson will pass down the knowledge that he has worked so hard to cultivate and legitimize.

The process has been enlightening and exciting for the father and son. “It’s been fun watching him get involved and grow in the profession,” Hollye admits. Carson was humorously shocked by his father’s compliment and asked that we get it down in writing — you’re welcome, Carson! A hug here and there doesn’t get in the way of some friendly competition though.

“Who would win in an argument,” TBLS asks.

“Me, of course,” Hollye says, with Carson laughing in the background. “I’ve got the age advantage.”

Carson’s answer is a little more telling as he jokingly tells us that his father “would never, ever concede.”

Sounds exactly like what the son of a lawyer would say.