

Mississippi lawyer sees ‘business opportunities’ aplenty for Jackson firm



By Brian Cox

Attorney Dillon King’s favorite aspect of playing soccer is relying on his vision in the backfield to identify a developing play and then using his passing skills to create an opportunity for another player to score.

The young attorney draws great satisfaction from recognizing potential and then helping to realize it.

The correlation to his law practice with Young Wells Williams P.A. in Ridgeland, Miss., is nearly self-evident.

“I like to try to find a creative solution for clients like I would for a striker on the soccer field,” he says. “I’ve always been a person who likes to solve problems. I like to approach a problem head-on and find a solution that nobody else has been able to see before.”

Though born during a blizzard in Chicago, Ill., King moved with his family while still a toddler to Mississippi where he grew up in the Jackson area. His childhood largely centered around soccer.

“I was obsessed with soccer,” says King. “It was all I wanted to do.”



Dillon and his fiancée, Jessi, on a hike to Sunset Rock in Chattanooga, Tenn. The couple got engaged last year in New Orleans.

And it was all he did, for years. His days were filled with playing soccer, traveling to play soccer, and practicing to play soccer. He played for travel teams as well as in school and had ambitions of playing in college and even possibly on the national team or in the Major Soccer League.

Around his junior year in high school, however, King came to feel burned out with the sport. It wasn’t so much that he fell out of love with soccer as that he grew tired of the space it took up in his life, leaving him time for little else. The decision to not pursue playing at the collegiate level was a gradual realization that opened him up to consider other paths in life.

The new plan was to go to medical school. He attended Mississippi State University on a biomedical engineering scholarship. Near the end of his first semester, however, he attended a lecture by an adjunct who had gone to medical school at Tulane University and who also happened to be a fellow redhead. King felt an immediate connection and so took to heart the adjunct’s advice that he shouldn’t go to medical school unless he was 100 percent certain about it.

“I wasn’t 100 percent sure about anything,” recalls King. “And I thought maybe med school wasn’t the path for me.”

He changed his major to economics, which he discovered a real interest in, and then he took a law class. The thought of somehow merging the two fields intrigued him and he started thinking about becoming a business lawyer.

After earning his undergraduate degree, King enrolled in a one-year MBA program at the University of Mississippi before entering the law school at Ole Miss. He had opportunities to clerk at Young Wells and at a construction company where he worked with in-house counsel.

“I got to see the transactional side of law from the client’s view and to gain perspective that helped me understand what a client needs, what’s important to them, and how to approach solving their problem,” he says of the experience.

During his 2L and 3L years, King clerked for Judge Neil P. Olack of the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District

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Soccer remains an important part of Dillon's life. With his beloved border collie-Australian shepherd mix, Rigby, looking on, Dillon sports his U.S. soccer jersey as he prepares to watch the U.S. national team play a match.

of Mississippi, which gained him an understanding of how judges interpret law. As a member of the Negotiation Board, he competed in the St. John's University Alternative Dispute Resolution Tournament and won the national championship.

“One of my favorite things in the world is negotiating with people,” says King. “My dad is a great negotiator and I think it was always a skill I admired in him. I decided it was something I would like in my toolset, so I worked on it and turned it into something I really enjoy today.”

His first position out of law school was with a litigation-oriented firm in Jackson where he primarily worked in insurance defense. He largely enjoyed the work, particularly in the courtroom, but his deeper interest lay in business law. So, after a few years, when Jim Neeld (who happened to be one of his former youth soccer coaches) approached him in 2022 – for the second time – about coming over to Young Wells Williams P.A., King felt the time was right to make the move.

He wanted to have a more active role in the economic development of Jackson and believed business law was the avenue to do it.

“Helping grow the state and helping grow the Jackson metro area really appeals to me and helping businesses grow in the area helps me do that, I think,” he says.

King sees opportunities for economic rejuvenation in Jackson.

As a fan of good food who is always up for trying out a new restaurant, King naturally points to the wide impact a successful restaurant can have on an area as an example of how such a business can kickstart a neighborhood's revival.

“I've seen neighborhoods in Jackson grow because of restaurants and other types of businesses that are successful,” he says with some fervency. “It's cool to see and I like having some small part of it. Of course, the people who actually run the business are the ones doing it, but it is nice to be able to say I had a very small part in helping that neighborhood a little bit.”

King touts Jackson's food scene, from its hottest eatery, Elvie's, a 2024 James Beard finalist run by two friends, to Sambou's African Kitchen, a 2023 James Beard semifinalist, to Pulito Osteria, a fantastic homemade pasta place, to some of the best barbecue ribs at Jefferson's Grill -- served out of a gas station.

“I've traveled to a lot of places and eaten in a lot of restaurants, and I'm surprised how Jackson can keep up,” he says.

King is trying to do his part to contribute to Jackson's thriving food scene. He just recently led the legal charge to negotiate and close a deal to help the owners of Elvie's revive and take over the operation of a downtown restaurant called the Mayflower



Avid food enthusiasts, Dillon and Jessi took a pasta-making class at Viking Cooking School in Greenwood, Miss. A homemade pasta restaurant is among the top of Dillon's favorite places to eat in Jackson.

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Café, which opened in 1935 and was about to close down if new ownership wasn’t found. The plan is to return the restaurant to its former glory, modernizing it a bit but maintaining a focus on the history that made it a Jackson institution.

“I am really excited about it,” says King. “I am very proud of what we accomplished.”

To his chagrin, however, downtown Jackson remains somewhat stagnant, and he would like to see significant investment from the state to bring prosperity back to the area. It’s almost as if Jackson were a soccer field, and King can envision potential plays and scoring opportunities – he wants to make the necessary passes to make it happen.

He is active with the Phoenix Club of Jackson, a group of young professionals who work closely with the Boys and Girls Club to engage at-risk youth. He sees the outreach effort as part of his vision for helping to revitalize the capital city.

“If I do want Jackson to be as successful as I want it to be, you’ve got to give kids in Jackson the opportunity to be successful, and if you give enough kids the opportunity to be successful then it’s going to help the area and you’re going to have a city you want to live in and other people want to live in.”

And if Jackson succeeds, says King, so do all the surrounding towns. At Young Wells Williams P.A., King believes he’s in the right place to play a role in the city’s future.

“It’s an incredible firm,” he says. “Jim Neeld and Wes Daughdrill are incredible attorneys who have given me tons of opportunities. They’ve been great mentors.”

King practices in the firm’s Business Opportunities Group, helping clients with all forms of corporate, commercial, and business matters and transactions. He also often represents clients on zoning, land use, and related projects. He is focusing on developing a concentration in commercial real estate.

King and his fiancée, Jessi, got engaged last year in New Orleans. The couple met at a music festival. Jessi is a marketing professional with a cellular carrier.

“Jessi has been a rock for me,” says King. “She’s been incredible. She’s been a huge part of my career in allowing me to chase my dreams and do what I’m doing now.”

The young couple enjoy concerts and exploring through food. They also spend time traveling, hiking, kayaking, and playing with their active border collie-Australian shepherd mix, Rigby.

And, of course, King still plays soccer in an adult league.

“I’m going to keep playing as long as I’m having a good time and my body hasn’t completely fallen apart,” he says with a laugh.



Attorney Dillon King and Jessi enjoy traveling. A recent trip involved attending a friend’s wedding in Akumal, Mexico.