

Family, football, and faith are ties that bind for Washington attorney



By Brian Cox

Among the many important threads woven into the fabric of attorney Caleb Tingstad's life, three stand out: family, football, and the law. They are nearly inseparable.

At Beresford Booth Lawyers in Edmonds, Wash., Tingstad's office is on the other side of the wall from where his father, David Tingstad, serves as the firm's managing partner and runs the firm's Business and Real Estate Law Groups. Tingstad can also open his office door and call across the hall to his mother, Janelle, who is an executive manager at the firm. Tingstad's younger brother, Drew, who recently finished law school, expects to join the firm after passing the bar in July. The family widely agrees that Tingstad's youngest sister, Lacey, was the smartest one for deciding not to pursue a legal career.

Law has become the family business, and the Tingstads make a conscious effort to keep the line clear between work issues and family concerns.

"Work talk is not the quality of communications you need to have with family if you want to continue to have a solid relationship," says Tingstad. "There have been many times we have had conversations where we make it clear that we're not going to talk about work."



A former collegiate football player for Western Oregon University, attorney Caleb Tingstad keeps his head in the game as a coach for Seattle's King's High School.

The family's connection to Beresford Booth goes back to when David Tingstad joined the firm in 1995. The origins of that connection are found, of all places, on the football field, and extend to the genesis of the firm.

"You'll find that football is a theme that runs in the family," says Tingstad with a smile.

Tingstad's father played fullback for Boise State and was friends with a teammate named Harry Beresford, whose father, Dick, was an attorney at Beresford Booth. Dick's father, Robert, founded the law firm with Wayne Booth in downtown Seattle in 1946. It was through his introduction to Dick Beresford that Tingstad's father went on to law school at Seattle University School of Law and joined the firm after graduating. In doing so, he linked the Tingstad family history with the firm's history.

Tingstad, who joined the firm in 2022, enjoys pointing out that his bar number is 59883; his father's is 26512, and Robert Beresford's is 2.

"It gives you an idea of how far back it goes," says Tingstad.

The full-service firm, which relocated from downtown Seattle 15 miles north to Edmonds in 2000 and now includes an office in nearby Bothell, is currently the largest law firm in Snohomish County with 26 attorneys in eight practice groups: Adoption and Assisted Reproduction; Divorce and Family Law; Business Law; Real Estate; Estate Planning, Probate and Guardianship; Litigation; Employment Law; and Banking Law. Clients range from start-up companies to families to growing businesses.

Tingstad is an associate in the Business, Banking, and Real Estate Law Groups, which makes his father his boss.

"My dad is owed tons of credit because he does such a good job of being open about the delineation of our relationship as father-and-son and colleagues," says Tingstad. "One thing that is part of the firm's DNA is that there is supposed to be no structured hierarchy. That philosophy was passed on to my dad from Dick, and my dad has tried to pass it on to the other lawyers. Beresford Booth is a very collegial environment."

Born and raised in Edmonds, Tingstad grew up knowing he wanted to play football in college and become a lawyer like his

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Attorney Caleb Tingstad and his wife, Emilie, were married in 2019 and are currently in the process of adopting their first child.

dad. He achieved both ambitions. Football has been a source of lifelong relationships for Tingstad, who remains friends with kids from his peewee football league.

As a tight end, Tingstad chose to attend Western Oregon University where he could play Division II football. He started every game his junior and senior years and was named Academic All-Great Northwest Athletic Conference.

“I love the strategy of the game, the complexity of it,” says Tingstad, who enjoyed the physical contact as well. “I feel the offensive line is so different from any other position because you are working so closely with five guys trying to accomplish the same goal.”

His commitment to football taught him from an early age to prioritize, manage time, and balance a host of obligations, including school, family, friends, and church.

It was through an interconnection of football and the law firm that Tingstad met his wife, Emilie. She was the daughter of an attorney who had previously worked with Tingstad’s father at Beresford Booth, and while Tingstad knew of Emilie, he didn’t meet her until their colleges played against one another in football in the fall of 2017. She was a cheerleader for Azusa Pacific University, and after the game, he asked her to grab a milkshake at In-and-Out Burger. They hit it off immediately and were married two years later.

Emilie is a digital marketing coordinator for CRISTA Ministries, a nonprofit that operates King’s Schools as well as a couple of radio stations, an assisted living facility, and an international disaster relief non-profit, among other things.

The young couple are currently in the midst of the adoption process, which has played an important role in each of their families of origin. Tingstad and Emilie each have adopted sisters. Their parents went through the adoption process together and both adoptions were handled by the firm’s adoption practice, which at that time, was headed up by Attorney Mark Demaray, who has since retired.

Currently, Beresford Booth Partner Dimitra Scott leads the Adoption & Assisted Reproduction Group and has been invaluable in guiding Tingstad and his wife through their adoption process.

“Our sincere hope is that by the end of the year we’ll have adopted our first child,” says Tingstad. “Both sets of parents are excited because it will be the first grandbaby on both sides.”

Tingstad earned his J.D. from Seattle University School of Law, after which he joined Beresford Booth as he had always hoped. Following in his father’s footsteps, Tingstad says his practice has focused primarily on transactional work, though he has begun gaining an interest in litigation through the influence of another important lawyer in his life – his father-in-law, who is a highly experienced litigator in Seattle.

“I sort of have this mishmash of worlds colliding where I have my dad on one side and my father-in-law on the other side,” says Tingstad, who has found a way to combine his interests through leveraging his transactional experience to advise business owners through “business divorce” disputes where co-owners separate, frequently through litigation.

“When you’re dealing with ‘business divorce’ litigation or disputes, people don’t want to be involved with a lawyer,” explains Tingstad. “They want to go back to running their business and being really successful.”

In his spare time, Tingstad coaches football at King’s High School, where his wife was once a student and is now the head cheer coach. Tingstad says the leadership position affords him the opportunity to positively impact the young lives of his players.

“One of the things my wife and I appreciate about coaching at a private Christian school is that you can be more intentional about expressing your faith,” says Tingstad. “You’re there to try to win. But at the same time, you’re there to try to pour into the kids’ lives and give back. The mantra of the athletic department is ‘Building Champions While Winning Championships.’”

Tingstad is a burgeoning wine collector and while he enjoys the hobby, what he finds most rewarding about it is sharing the interest with his family.

“The collecting is fun, but the unique part is that both my parents and my in-laws enjoy wine as well, so it’s something we all

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share together,” he says. “Getting to open a nice bottle of wine and enjoy it with your family while you sit around having conversation... in my world is one of the most special things. I love it. It’s another excuse to communicate with one another and be involved in one another’s lives.”

Tingstad has been fortunate enough to have strong relationships with his grandparents with whom he regularly spends time. His great-grandmother, who he calls GG, just turned 100 years old, and he believes she has passed on her resilience to him and his siblings.

“Getting to have the relationships that I have with my grandparents makes me realize the extent to which I am so fortunate,” says Tingstad. “You hear the phrase, ‘You stand on the shoulders of giants’ and that is definitely the case for me.”

As Tingstad grows his practice and helps continue the firm’s legacy, he is acutely aware that his true wealth comes from the relationships he has with family and the depth of his faith. He says he considers himself among the richest of people because of both.

“By no means am I here on my own,” says Tingstad. “I have been incredibly blessed with the family I have around me. I have no excuse but to do well because everyone around me has put me in this position to be successful, and I count that as one of my many blessings.”



Caleb Tingstad earned his J.D. from Seattle School of Law, the same school his proud father, David Tingstad (left), attended.