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THE ACCIDENTAL LAWYER

Bogan guides myriad public utility clients through regulatory mazes

BY OLIVIA ABEL
PHOTO AUTUMN DRISCOLL

At one time, David Bogan, JD ’86, thought he’d become an actor, and even pursued that career in New York City for a time. Instead, through fate and what he calls divine intervention, he is respected as one of Connecticut’s leading public utility lawyers.

In the past 30 years, Bogan has worked with all of the state’s public utilities, including electric, gas and water, but it is perhaps in the telecommunications sector that he has made his biggest mark. Bogan was a major player in creating and implementing the rules when the state deregulated the telecommunications industry in 1994—two years before the federal government did the same. This handed him his first big client.

“From 1988 to 2011, I represented what is now Verizon Wireless,” he says. “I was witness to the birth and growth of the entire wireless industry.”

Today, Bogan is a partner at Locke Lord, an international law firm with more than 20 offices worldwide. “Basically, I am a regulatory policy litigator. A lot of what I do is half litigation, half business consulting,” he says, noting that companies hire him to guide them through the minefield of state and federal regulations.

“These companies have lobbyists who draft legislation, but then I help them revise and rework it,” he says. Bogan is frequently called as an expert to testify before legislative committees on a wide range of utility-related issues. Recently he appeared on behalf of CTIA, the wireless trade association, while helping to set up the rules for small cell 5G deployment in Connecticut, the future standard for internet connectivity.

Growing up in a Chicago suburb, Bogan frequently was told he’d make a good lawyer. “I liked oral presentation,” he says, but he ultimately gravitated toward the performing arts. As a 5-year-old, he appeared in an ad for Butterball Swift’s Premium Turkey.

After high school, he spent some time on “the college circuit,” starting at the University of Wisconsin and transferring to NYU. He dropped out to work in theater in New York City, but he grew tired of what he termed “the poverty-stricken life.” He enrolled at the University of Bridgeport, completed a bachelor’s degree in finance and banking, and moved on to law school.

After short stints at two state agencies involved in utility regulations, Bogan took a job as a prosecutor at the state attorney’s office. During his first six months and five trials, he became hooked on the adrenaline rush from getting a verdict.

“I loved it; I thought this was what I wanted to do,” he says. Meanwhile a more established lawyer who represented most of the local cable companies kept offering him a job. “He called me month after month after month,” says Bogan. “Finally he made me an offer that I couldn’t refuse.”

For two years, Bogan learned the tricks of the trade with this lawyer. He then spent 22 years at Robinson & Cole, where he became a partner, before leaving in 2012 for his current position. At Robinson & Cole, he established the company’s first Utilities Practice Group and went on to represent dozens of companies, including the nation’s largest cable and wireless firms.

Bogan was hired in 1999 to represent Dominion Resources, a Virginia company, when it bought the Millstone Power Station in Waterford for almost $1.3 billion. The nuclear power plant supplies 25 percent of all the energy in the Northeast. Bogan still has that account and, in 2019, helped orchestrate a deal that kept the power station open for another 10 years.

“The loss of Millstone would have been catastrophic for our state and our region,” Gov. Ned Lamont said in a statement announcing the agreement. Bogan also snagged Comcast as a client in 1996 and is still representing them today. “I’ve been incredibly fortunate,” he says.

These days Bogan bounces between Hartford (where he is officially based), Boston and his home on Cape Cod, which he shares with his wife, Heather Hunt, who is also an attorney. He has four adult children from his first marriage and three grandchildren. In November 2019, he was elected to a Town Council position in Barnstable on the Cape. “It’s a dizzying schedule sometimes, but I make it work,” he says.

When he’s not working, Bogan can be found in the kitchen. “I live to eat,” he says. “I cook every day; it’s how I relax.” He lists a long line of recent dinners, including steak and Osso Buco, but he’s particularly proud of his baby back ribs, which he smokes at home over two days. His ribs are so popular that he gives them away in the office at Christmas time.

Looking back at his career, Bogan feels he has come full circle. “Being an actor actually served me well. I use those skills as an attorney and as a councilor. It’s all come together now.”

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David Bogan, JD ’86, was heavily involved in creating and implementing the rules during the deregulation of Connecticut’s telecommunications industry.