

Q & A

Q & A with Rob Buchanan

Managing partner of the Buchanan Firm in Grand Rapids, Rob Buchanan is recognized as one of the top personal injury and medical malpractice attorneys in Michigan. He also is a longtime board member of Primerus™.

An alumnus of Kalamazoo College, Buchanan earned his law degree from Wayne State University before joining one of the premier law firms in West Michigan. In 1995, he left that firm to start the Buchanan Firm, working with his father, Jack, and his sister, Jane Beckering, at various points over the following decade. Throughout his legal career, Buchanan has been active in local and state bar associations, capped in 2020-21 when he served as president of the State Bar of Michigan.

Buchanan and his wife, Mary, have three daughters, Ellie, Brooke, and Sarah.



The brother-sister duo of Rob Buchanan and Jane Beckering, now a U.S. District Court judge after serving on the bench of the Michigan Court of Appeals, enjoyed the beauty of Lake Tahoe during a family trip out west.



Q: Before becoming an attorney, what was your first job?

A: Aside from summer jobs, I continued my education after high school straight through graduating law school. My first job was as an attorney at a big, full-service law firm in Grand Rapids. However, my most interesting summer job was working on the crew of an airplane glider (soaring) operation in Ionia, Michigan. The business trained new glider pilots and power-airplane pilots, gave glider rides to the public, towed aerial advertising banners, and ran the airport, mechanically fixed engines and repaired airplanes, fueled aircraft, sheltering airplanes, and mowed the large grass runways. We also hosted and ran the U.S. National Soaring competition for 15-meter sailplanes. The gig had very long hours but was a lot of fun. I also learned to fly gliders and power airplanes.

Q: What motivated you to pursue a legal career?

A: Because my dad and grandpa were both great trial lawyers, I grew up listening to exciting stories about courtroom dramas, showdowns, and victories at the dinner table almost every night. They were the best at their craft and absolutely loved their job and the people they helped.

Q: Who was your chief mentor and how did he or she influence your career?

A: My dad has been my chief mentor. He has always championed my successes and helped me learn and grow from my missteps and failures.

Q: What's the best piece of advice you've ever received?

A: Never, never, never, never – in nothing, great or small, large or petty – never give in, except to convictions of honor and good sense. Never yield to force. Never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy.

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Q: What is one thing you would like to learn to do?

A: I would like to learn to play the piano or the guitar well. I am amazed when I watch people who do.

Q: What is your proudest career achievement?

A: Running my own law firm and having people seek us out and hire us to help over all the competition. Being President of the State Bar of Michigan (2020-21) for the 42,000 attorneys in our state is a close second.

Q: What other career path might you have chosen?

A: I would have chosen Anthony Bourdain or Stanley Tucci's job, traveling the world, eating great local foods, and enjoying great adventures.

Q: What is your most treasured material possession?

A: A red 1956 Jaguar XK 140 MC Roadster. It isn't practical transportation, but it is beautiful and purrs.



Rob joined his two daughters, Brooke and Sarah, both students at Indiana University, for a Hoosier football game.



An avid boater, Rob Buchanan takes a spin with his canine companion Gatsby.

Q: What is your happiest childhood memory?

A: Long-distance family road trips driving across the United States, camping, hiking mountains, diving into cold clear lakes, downhill skiing, eating in restaurants, studying the novelty items in Stuckey's vending machines, and driving from town to town between adventures.

Q: What is your favorite movie and book?

A: "Something Wild" (1986) is one of my favorite movies. It is not well known but is a charming and exhilarating movie experience. My favorite book is "Barrel Fever" (1994) by David Sadaris, a wonderful collection of hilarious essays.

Q: What is the most awe-inspiring place you have visited?

A: Machu Picchu in the Andes Mountains of Peru. However, I was so sick it is a hazy memory.

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Q: What are your favorite leisure time pursuits?

A: Traveling, scuba diving, downhill skiing, and driving anything with a motor (car, boat, motorcycle, airplane . . .).

Q: What is your favorite famous or inspirational quote?

A: "Anything you do should be better than anything you've done before." Louie C. K.

Q: Who is on your guest list for the ideal dinner party?

A: Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Tina Fey, Matt Damon, Elon Musk, Stephen Colbert, Antony Blinken, and Charlize Theron.

Q: What are the top three items on your bucket list?

A: Driving a sport car in the Mille Miglia vintage race in Italy, flying a P-51 Mustang airplane, and scuba diving World War II wrecks in Papua New Guinea.



A love of flying has captivated pilot Rob Buchanan since he was a teen.