

Q & A

Q & A with Jim Neeld

Jim Neeld concentrates his practice in business and corporate matters; mergers and acquisitions; telecommunications; commercial transactions; and corporate finance including early-stage venture financing structures and debt and equity offerings.

A shareholder and president of Young Wells Williams P.A. in Ridgeland, Miss., Neeld earned his bachelor's and law degrees from the University of Mississippi.

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

A: In high school, I had a paper route for The Yazoo Herald that came out twice a week, and I was a lifeguard during summers at the Yazoo Country Club pool.

Q: What motivated you to pursue a legal career?

A: I was first exposed to being a corporate/transactional lawyer by my father, who served for almost 50 years as general counsel to Cal-Maine Foods, Inc., the largest producer of shell eggs in the U.S. He travelled a lot internationally and worked on very interesting projects which led me to believe that being that type of lawyer might be interesting and fun.



Jim Neeld at the summit of a mountain in Canada's Jasper National Park with his wife Jenny.



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

A: James Leon Young, the founder of my firm, who built a reputation for zealously representing his clients. In addition to being a tough litigator, he developed a sophisticated business practice and gave me material roles, very early in my career, in significant business transactions. This whetted my appetite for commercial/corporate matters.

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

A: From legendary Jackson, Miss. business leader Leland Speed: "It takes a damn good partner to beat no partner at all." (Incidentally, I've been blessed to have some great law partners.)

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

A: Become certified in offshore sailing charters and go island hopping.

Q: What is your proudest career achievement?

A: Joining a telecom start-up company as general counsel and handling the legal side of its growth from a dozen to more than 1,200 employees, as well as its initial public offering and subsequent merger with another publicly traded company at an all-time record valuation for a wireless company.

Q: What other career path might you have chosen?

A: I majored in accounting and was headed in that direction but shifted to law after a summer internship with one of the Big 8 accounting firms. In my next life, I think I'll pursue being a recording engineer for a recording studio.

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Q: What is your most treasured material possession?

A: Probably my collection of family photos, videos, and newspaper clippings. I just got access to a treasure trove of previously not seen items relating to my grandparents and great-grandparents that I'm digitizing to preserve for future generations.

Q: What is your happiest childhood memory?

A: Playing with my friends and cousins – we'd ride our bikes all over town and play in our neighborhood and adjoining woods from morning till dusk, only taking a break for a quick lunch.

Q: What is your favorite movie and book?

A: Movie: I'm a science fiction nerd, so I would have to say the first "Star Wars" movie is an all-time favorite. The first "Blade Runner" movie is a close second.

Book: "North Toward Home," by Yazoo City, Miss. native son Willie Morris.



Turkey hunting ranks among the favorite leisure time pursuits for Jim Neeld.

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

A: The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

Q: What are your favorite leisure time pursuits?

A: Just about anything on boats – sailboats, power boats, kayaks, etc. I also enjoy hunting and cycling on both road and gravel bikes. And, attending live concerts and other music events.



In a treasured sailing photo with his grand-nephew, Luke Wells.

Q: What is your favorite famous or inspirational quote?

A: "Perfect is the enemy of the good." ~Voltaire

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

A: Let's go with a musical night: Stevie Ray Vaughn, Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, Elvis Presley, Stevie Nicks, Janis Joplin, and my wife, Jenny.

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

A: See the Tour de France in person and cycle a few parts of the route. Go island hopping on a bareboat sailboat charter in the Caribbean Sea. Walk the Camino de Santiago.



A music lover, Jim Neeld (right) is pictured backstage at a Widespread Panic concert with his brother, Bubba Neeld (left), and John Bell, singer/guitarist for the group.