

Q & A

Q & A with Rudy Rivera



A native of Ohio, Rudy Rivera is an alumnus of Ohio Northern University, where he was captain of the wrestling team. He earned his law degree from St. Louis University School of Law, and early in his legal career was a solo practitioner specializing in facilitating international adoptions. In 2007, he joined Fidelity National Financial, where he is now the Chief International Counsel for the Fortune 500 company based in Jacksonville, Fla.

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

A: My first job ever was shining shoes in the local taverns. The price was 25 cents per pair of shoes. I knew every bar and honkytonk in my neighborhood. I probably heard every Country and Western song that existed at the time going in and out of the bars. We were raised on public assistance, so the revenue from shining shoes was something we needed.



All smiles in a favorite family photo are Rudy Rivera with (l-r) his son Rodolfo Jr.; his late mother Luisa Martinez; his daughter Luisa Maria; and his younger son Diego.

Q: What motivated you to pursue a legal career?

A: I decided to become a lawyer in the seventh grade. I knew a local lawyer who was politically influential and thought that was what I want to be. I also knew that working at the local steel plant as many of my high school friends did was not going to be an option, so I went for the brass ring. Everything I did from that moment on was to get to my dream of becoming a lawyer.

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

A: My mother was my chief mentor. Although she only had a sixth-grade education, she understood its value and pushed hard for my sister and me to study. All she knew is that education is good. I was a terrible student during elementary school. I can still hear her admonishing me, "Do you want to grow up to be a factory worker or do you want to make something of yourself?" She would often say you don't want to live like we live now.

Les Fazekas, who was my first judo instructor, was one of my first mentors. The judo lessons were free, and he paid for my first judo uniform. The second was Cyprian Kittel, a brother at Sacred Heart Chapel in Lorain. He taught me to aim as high as I can no matter how many people discourage you. If you fail, you will end up somewhere in the middle. But if you aim low, you will always stay at the bottom.

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

A: One of the best pieces of advice I received is that you do not need to be a genius to be a lawyer. It sounds counterintuitive, but an old lawyer once said the more prepared you are, the smarter you get. Know your case; know the law, and you will do well.

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

A: I would like to learn how to sing to the point where people will pay to listen. Absent that, I enjoy doing a talk show on my YouTube channel, "Conversations with Rudy Rivera."

Q: What is your proudest career achievement?

A: I have been blessed because I love what I do. One of my proudest career achievements has nothing to do with money or prestige. I facilitated hundreds of adoptions of children in foreign countries to American parents. I also helped a number of undocumented children obtain proper legal status in the U.S. These were life-changing moments for the families and the children. To this day, I get e-mails and text messages from families saying how their lives have changed.

Q: What other career path might you have chosen?

A: If there was no way I could ever be a lawyer, I would have loved to have been a talk show host.

Q: What do you do to give back to your community?

A: I am on the Board of the Jacksonville chapter of Communities in Schools. This is an organization that works with high school students who are at high risk of becoming dropouts because of personal or family situations. CIS provides the necessary resources so that these children can flourish in high school and have a path to college.

I am also on the board of Mission House, which is a not-for-profit that provide services such as food, medicine, and clothing to the homeless in the Jacksonville Beach areas.



A black belt in Judo, Rudy (left) is a three-time national Judo champion.



Posing for a photo with Rudy Rivera at the Primerus International Summit in New York City earlier this year was Felipe Chapula of Cacheaux Cavazos & Newton.

Q: Can you share a positive referral experience within Primerus™?

A: My relationship with Cacheaux, Cavazos & Newton in Mexico City was a direct result of my attendance at a Primerus event. I've used the firm now for approximately 10 years with great success. I have also met other great firms.

Q: What is your most treasured material possession?

A: I really have no treasured possessions. Objects are just things. The real values in life are the friendships and relationships you develop. Those are worth far more than any material possession.

Q: What is your happiest childhood memory?

A: Winning my first judo tournament.

Q: What is your favorite movie and book?

A: My favorite book is "The Razor's Edge" written by W. Somerset Maugham as well as the two movies based on the book. The book and the movie follow the journey of Larry Darnell, whom

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you would never know about except for the book but has an incredible impact on those around him. The title comes from Upanishads, a class of Hindu literature that says: “The sharp edge of a razor is difficult to pass over; thus, the wise say the path to salvation is hard.”

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

A: There are two countries in the world that I really love: Mexico and the Czech Republic.

Q: What are your favorite leisure time pursuits?

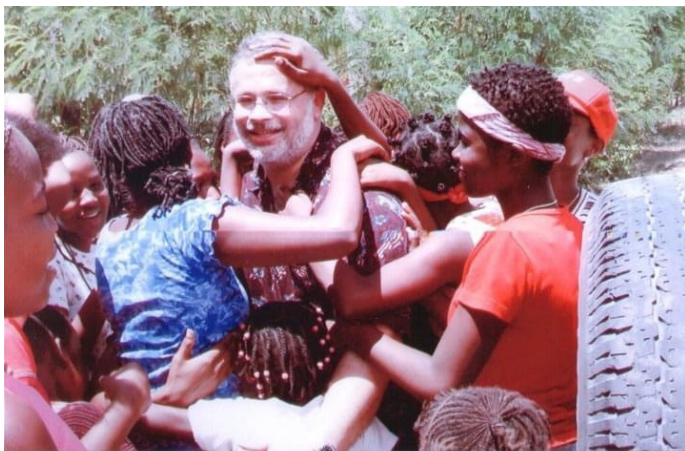
A: Hanging out with my son, Diego, and interviewing guests on my YouTube channel.

Q: What is your favorite famous or inspirational quote?

A: My favorite quote is from Winston Churchill: “Success is not final, and failure is not fatal. It is the courage to continue that matters.” Successes and failures are part the journey we must all take in life. At the end of your time on earth, all you can hope for is more successes than failures.

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

A: I would invite people on the extreme left and on the far right. It would make for interesting conversation with the hope that we can find common ground.



Rudy Rivera greets children at an orphanage in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, where he did pro bono work, helping facilitate adoptions.



The sights and sounds of Times Square served as a fitting backdrop for a photo of attorney Rudy Rivera, a man with an exceptionally busy legal schedule.

Q: What advice would you give a younger lawyer?

A: No one cares how smart you are. Can you do the work is the ultimate question. Be honest. Admit when you make a mistake. Compassion and humility are an important part of being a lawyer. Learn to listen and do not speak just for the sake of talking. Be precise in your communications.

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

A: Go to China. Ride my bike 100 miles in one day. Become a professional speaker.