

Q & A

Q & A with Eckart Broedermann



The founder of Broedermann Jahn in Hamburg, Germany, Eckart Broedermann has concentrated his practice both on international transactions (including M&A, joint ventures, and international construction) and on international litigation and arbitration for more than 30 years. In his teaching at Hamburg University and in his publications, Broedermann concentrates on international contract law (including risk management) and on international arbitration.

A member of the Primerus™ Board of Directors, Broedermann earned his LL.M. from Harvard Law School in 1983, and speaks four languages – German, English, French, and Italian.

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

A: I guess, “becoming an attorney” was my first real job, back in 1983 in Washington, D.C. prior to being admitted to the bar in New York in 1984. As a student, I sold jewelry in the shop of my grandmother in a suburb of Hamburg, Germany, especially

during the Christmas season when she left for the Christmas holiday to accommodate my dentist-grandfather. I believed that one cannot close such a shop at the time of the best sales.

Q: What motivated you to pursue a legal career?

A: Paris. I was invited to spend a year in Paris with a family, in exchange for giving some German lessons and walking the dog once in a while. To do that, I gave up my place to study medicine in Germany and decided to study something where everybody would start from scratch. I chose law and psychology because other studies of interest such as history required too much school knowledge which would be different in France as compared to Germany. After a couple of months of parallel studies, I decided to focus on the law where I liked the people (co-students) better.

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

A: A German professor of criminology teaching in Paris, when I studied there, with deep knowledge in philosophy, sociology, and literature. He taught me to always think outside my comfort zone. He would fly in once a week from Germany and we would always have a dinner including, in addition to him, his assistant and me, one special guest like the director of a top biological research institute. These discussions have shaped my thinking and thereby my career.

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

A: It is *three* pieces of advice which share the first rank. (1) Listen! (2) Be tolerant, like in the famous tale of the three rings which represent three religions of equal standing (Lessing, 1729–81). (3) Never fall in love with your own writing. There is always room for improvement.



A longtime dog lover, Eckart Broedermann is captivated by the charm of his latest pup, Whisky.

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

A: To have more patience. Otherwise, I am living my dream.

Q: What is your proudest career achievement?

A: My law firm, Broedermann Jahn. I declined partnership in a big law firm, founded my own firm in 1996, followed by finding in 2000 the first real partner (laterally), Philipp von Dietze, and then giving step-by-step our best young associates the room to grow into equity partnership, including Eckard, Tina, York, and John.

Q: What other career path might you have chosen?

A: Painting artist. Or a director of a museum of modern art.

Q: What is your most treasured material possession?

A: My sailboat, owned jointly with my wife, who is the captain.

Q: What is your happiest childhood memory?

A: Swimming in the Adria (in a region which is today Croatia) with dives down to 10 meters (approximately 32 feet) and jumps from rocks as high as 10 meters.

Q: What is your favorite movie and book?

A: Movie: "Casablanca."

Book: Tolstoy, "War and Peace."

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

A: Bergen, Norway, because I met my wife, the biggest inspiration of my life, there on a sailboat (approximately 33 years ago).

Q: What are your favorite leisure time pursuits?

A: Sailing and golf.



At home on the seas, Eckart Broedermann is pictured at the helm of his sailboat Gefion, a vessel named after the ancient goddess linked to the creation of Denmark.

Q: What is your favorite famous or inspirational quote?

A: "See, this is the art of living, freeing oneself from the heavy path of life and smiling at the great must-dos." (Morgenstern, German poet, 1871-1914, free translation).

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

A: My wife and two other couples with whom we meet three times a year since over 20 years.

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

A: 1) Sailing once around the Baltic Sea, starting in Kiel (Germany) along the coasts of Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Sweden, and Denmark back to Germany. 2) Visiting India (not alone for business, but together with my wife). 3) Visiting Machu Picchu, Peru.