

Alabama attorney is a DIY specialist at home and a team player at work

By Brian Cox

Wilson Landers never expected to fall in love with Birmingham, Ala.

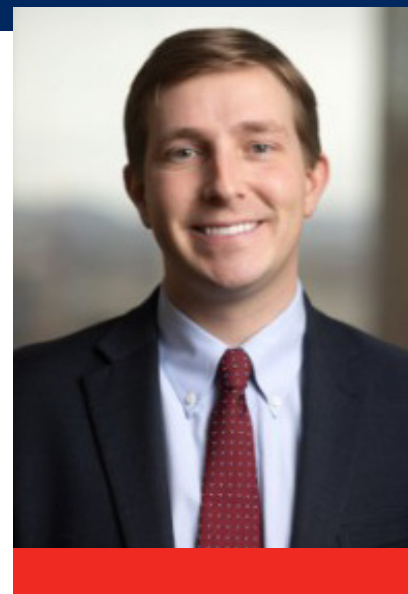
In fact, from what he'd heard of the city, he was certain it wasn't the town for him. His initial plan when he began studying law at Samford University's Cumberland School of Law was to relocate to a bigger city where there was "more life" as soon as he earned his law degree.

So, when he realized after only one semester at Cumberland that he could "definitely see myself living in Birmingham forever," he says it was the best surprise of his life.

"Birmingham is the perfectly sized city, where you can have everything that you could want to do, but not all the hassles of a big city," says Landers. "Now, I always tell people that if you can't find something you absolutely love about Birmingham, then it's a 'you' problem, it's not a Birmingham problem."



Wilson (far right) celebrates his brother Trent's engagement to Meaghan Hindes with his parents, Chris and Alison.



An associate at Christian & Small LLP, Landers is more than just settled. He recently bought a house in the city and is knee-deep in DIY renovation projects.

Landers grew up in Anniston, Ala., a small town near the Georgia border where his mother worked as a real estate agent and his civil engineer father ran a small industrial equipment company. He attended a small private school, graduating in a class of 30 that was, remarkably, the largest class at the school.

"When I was a senior, I could name everyone from 7th through 12th grade, first and last name, and probably tell you where they lived," he says with a laugh.

That closeness taught him early how to build relationships with people who didn't necessarily share his background or interests.

"You end up getting to know people you might not otherwise connect with," he says. "That was a good early lesson – you probably have more in common with people than you think on the surface."

The small school also meant wide opportunities. He played just about every sport the school offered: soccer, basketball, baseball.

"Tryouts were mostly just signing up," he jokes.

From a young age, Landers had a quiet sense that law might be his path.

"Nobody in my family was a lawyer," he says. "There was no specific moment. It was just something I always found interesting – and I never had a reason not to keep going."

After high school, Landers enrolled at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, majoring in finance and economics. Though law was always the goal, he deliberately chose a practical undergraduate path – just in case.

"I didn't know anyone personally who was a lawyer, so I figured if I got into law school and hated it, I'd still have a degree I could use," he says.

It turned out that he didn't hate it. After adjusting to the competitive personalities he encountered in college, he found his

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Wilson enjoys a birthday lunch with his brother, Trent, at a Birmingham restaurant. Wilson fell in love with Birmingham during his first year of law school and decided to make the city home.

rhythm. His first clerkship at the civil defense law firm of Spain & Gillon, LLC confirmed his decision.

“That’s when everything clicked,” he says. “That was the moment I thought, okay, this fits.”

Landers graduated from law school in May 2020 – arguably one of the most challenging times to enter the legal market. Even classmates at the top of his class had offers rescinded. He landed a job with Spain & Gillon, which is one of Alabama’s oldest firms. The experience was both formative and eye-opening.

“They did every kind of civil defense work you could think of, which was great exposure for me,” he says. “I learned how to handle a case from start to finish.”

After about 18 months, a former colleague who had moved from Spain & Gillon to Christian & Small encouraged Landers to explore a change. Christian & Small was expanding its associate class and was eager to grow.

“They asked me to grab lunch and just hear them out,” he says. “From the first conversation, it was completely different. They talked about mentorship, growth, and business development. I knew this was where I wanted to be.”

At Christian & Small, Landers has flourished in the firm’s collaborative and friendly environment. In just three years, he’s become the firm’s longest-tenured associate – a testament to both the firm’s recent growth and his commitment to it.

His practice is broad and still evolving. Early on, he handled homeowners and auto claims – straightforward matters that gave him confidence in the courtroom and in negotiations. He later moved into dram shop cases, bad faith, and coverage work. Now, his docket includes commercial transportation, complex torts, and some mass tort matters.

“It’s a wide range, and I like that,” he says. “It keeps things interesting.”

Looking ahead, Landers is focused on continuing to grow his practice, deepening his roots in Birmingham, and contributing to the collaborative environment that drew him to Christian & Small in the first place.

He’s served on the junior board of the Ronald McDonald House since law school and is active with the Phoenix Club of Birmingham, which supports the Boys & Girls Club of Central Alabama.

Outside of work, Landers stays active. He still plays soccer and basketball and took up golf in law school. His weekends are filled with friends, trips to a nearby lake house his parents own, and visits to see college friends now spread across the country.

But these days, most of his spare hours are spoken for each week. He recently bought a 1960s-era house on a wooded lot in Birmingham and has taken on most of the renovation work himself. The yard was buried under four feet of leaves when he moved in. The house needed cosmetic updates and care. He’s all in.

“I have to remind myself sometimes that it’s not a sprint,” he says. “I leave the firm and then work until midnight on the house. When it’s your own, it doesn’t feel like work. I just love doing it.”

The city Landers once couldn’t imagine staying in for longer than three years is now home.



Wilson (second from left), who still plays soccer, basketball and golf, catches an Atlanta Braves game with friends.