

# HOUSTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

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## FACE TO FACE WITH...

### Tom Forestier

Attorney | Winstead PC



**AGE:** 50

**WHAT KIND OF CAR DO YOU DRIVE?**

2004 Lexus Sedan LS430

**WHAT DID YOU LISTEN TO ON THE WAY TO WORK THIS MORNING?**

CNN on satellite radio

**WHAT'S YOUR SMARTPHONE?**

Despite the Blackberry outage, which almost drove me over the edge, I'm a loyal Blackberry user.

**WHO WOULD PORTRAY YOU IN A MOVIE?**

A good friend of mine said, 'You look like this guy from Mad Men, Jon Hamm.' So I looked him up and said, 'No way, ... I think he's a lot better looking.'

There's no shortage of people who are excited by the promise of what is happening in the Eagle Ford Shale play, but Houston energy attorney Tom Forestier has an extra incentive to head to South Texas.

San Antonio is his hometown, and the existence of a major shale play in his former stomping grounds gives him reason to visit the Alamo City a few times a week.

Forestier is the managing partner of the Houston office of Winstead PC, but he began his career as a roughneck. While working on a bachelor's degree in petroleum engineering, he spent two summers in the oil patch, where he earned \$15 an hour. With one diploma in hand, he went on to law school at the University of Texas intent on becoming an energy litigator.

He talked with *Houston Business Journal* reporter Deon Daugherty about riding the ups and downs of the oil industry and how his time in the oil patch helped him to establish credibility in the legal sector.

#### What's the best advice you've given anyone?

What I tell my sons, as gently as possible — and sometimes I have to do it by texting — is that you're going to have to work super hard at whatever you do. Right now, that's academics, and you must work really, really hard to then be able to take

advantage of opportunities as they come up ... and, you need to be very careful about what you put on Facebook. It's a living legacy.

#### What do you wish you were better at?

I wish I was a better listener. In our profession, we can go to law school and learn all kinds of trial advocacy skills, to make an argument, articulate various points and be zealous. I'm not aware of a single law school course that teaches students to listen. I've been fortunate to have had mentors along the way to teach me the value of listening.

#### What is your biggest pet peeve?

This cuts across many lines: It's people that complain about things but don't offer solutions to fix them. Let's solve the problem, not just talk about the problem.

#### What's the last book you've read?

"Decision Points" by George W. Bush. Regardless of your politics, what I liked about it the most is it really illustrates how difficult it is to serve as leader of any organization, not only because you have to make difficult decisions, but because you have to do it when the problem doesn't have a clear right decision. No matter

what you do, you're going to be criticized. It was really instructive on that concept.

#### What is one thing that people would be surprised to learn about you?

That I have run three marathons in my life, all within nine months of each other. I ran the New York City Marathon in November 2003, the one in Houston in January '04, and then five months later, I ran the San Diego Marathon.

#### Why in the world would you do that to yourself?

Actually, when I was in the starting line, I thought that after you've run one marathon, why would you run any more — what is there left to prove unless you think you're going to win it? My dad, in the late '40s, ran four marathons — from 1948 through 1951 — and won each year. I guess like most fathers and sons, we're very competitive.

#### What's on your bucket list?

This ties into turning 50 ... I want to go to the Masters in Augusta. I'm an avid golfer. This past year, I went to the Super Bowl in Dallas. I went to the men's Final Four in Houston, so those two things came off my list.