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Thomas Powell is an associate in the Commercial Finance Practice Group at Parker, Hudson, Rainer & Dobbs LLP. Thomas focuses his practice on the negotiation, documentation, and administration of commercial lending transactions, representing banks and other financial institutions in both bilateral and syndicated transactions. He often works on transactions with complex, multilayered capital structures and has handled numerous transactions involving multiple bond and equity issuances and the related complex intercreditor arrangements. He earned his B.A. from Furman University, magna cum laude, and his J.D. from the University of Georgia School of Law, magna cum laude. Thomas served as a primary drafter of Georgia's UCC amendments addressing electronic records and other modernizing updates, which were approved by Georgia's General Assembly in March 2024. Following law school, Thomas clerked for the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Florida.

What is the best professional advice you have been given and how have you implemented it?

I received similar advice from two different partners in the middle of separate deals with tough negotiations: "It's all about the client." That advice is enormously helpful for recentering my perspective in challenging situations. It also is a good reminder to never lose sight that we are here to help our clients achieve their own goals at the end of each transaction. Each deal and negotiation is an opportunity to help our clients shine.

What role has mentorship played in your career?

A huge role! I would not be where I am without my mentors at Parker Hudson. I had the opportunity to work with a lot of different partners early on, and every single one was willing (and had the patience) to teach me not only how to do something but why we did it a certain way. That provided a great opportunity to see everyone's strengths and model my own approach on those strengths. Whether it is solutions to legal issues, negotiating style, documentation approaches, or general deal management and communication, there are many ways to solve our daily problems, and knowing the right approach for each situation requires a deep toolbox.

The mentorship at Parker Hudson extends beyond the legal work. My mentors have taught me how to manage work and family obligations, shared recipes, opened their homes for team gatherings, and supported my wife and I through life changes.

What do you wish older generations knew about your generation's approach to work?

I won't speak for every Millennial, but for myself: the why matters a lot. If I understand the why, I can operate with a greater degree of independence. I can extrapolate the point to similar situations.

We all should take the time to explain our reasoning to the junior team members. As a side note to my fellow Millennials, do not be afraid to shoulder some of the follow-up responsibility by touching base after the deal on any lingering matters where you want to understand what went into the decision-making process.

Do you feel there's been a learning curve for you as we've moved from working remotely, to hybrid to, in some cases, back to the office?

My time at Parker Hudson covered the full spectrum: I started fully onsite, then we went fully remote, and now the team is back in the office three days a week.

Personally, I try to be in the office five days a week. Some of that is for personal reasons (I have a one-year-old at home who can make it very difficult to work if he knows I am around), but much of it is that being in person makes collaborative work easier and leads to more opportunities to learn from my partners.

What career trajectory would you like to be on?

My optimal trajectory is pretty straightforward for those in a law firm: make partner and retire at Parker Hudson. I do not anticipate any major changes, just the steady personal and professional growth in terms of team management, deal structuring, and business development.

How do you navigate setbacks or failures, and what lessons have you learned from them?

After a setback, I think all we can do is pick up, move forward, and do better each following day.