

PERSONAL & PRACTICE:

# Faegre Baker Daniels Attorney Profiles

## Francina Dlouhy

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### PERSONAL:

#### WHAT IS YOUR IDEA OF PERFECT HAPPINESS?

- ▶ A weekend in Chicago with my new granddaughter. While I have always enjoyed time in Chicago for its museums, theatres and big city life, it is even better since Lillian came along.

#### WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST EXTRAVAGANCE?

- ▶ My family and friends would describe me as frugal, so this question is hard to answer. If I have one weakness when shopping, it's for shoes.

#### WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE JOURNEY?

- ▶ My husband and I went to the Grand Tetons and Yellowstone National Park recently. I'd go back in a moment. It was gorgeous.

#### WHO OR WHAT IS THE GREATEST LOVE OF YOUR LIFE?

- ▶ My husband of 37 years, Steve Dlouhy. He's a geneticist at Indiana University School of Medicine in Indianapolis. He supports, inspires and grounds me—as needed!

#### WHICH TALENT WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO HAVE?

- ▶ I would like to learn to play the piano, if it's not too late. In fact, having any musical talent would be terrific. It's an area where I am clearly deficient.

#### IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING ABOUT YOURSELF, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

- ▶ My height. I would like to be just a few inches taller.

#### WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT?

- ▶ Raising (with my husband) our wonderful daughter, Elizabeth. She studied engineering at Purdue and then got a law degree. She now practices patent litigation and prosecution in Chicago.

#### WHAT IS YOUR MOST TREASURED POSSESSION?

- ▶ One of my most treasured possessions is a silver teapot that belonged to my grandmother, after whom I am named. My family and I emigrated from Scotland to the U.S. when I was six. I remember my grandmother using the silver teapot in Scotland—for special occasions.

#### WHAT DO YOU MOST VALUE IN YOUR FRIENDS?

- ▶ Loyalty. I don't have a large group of friends, but I have friends who have been loyal over many years. I graduated from Hiram College in 1974 along with a group of six close friends. To this day, we have kept in touch through all the trials and tribulations of our lives and are as close now as we were 40 years ago.

#### WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE HERO OR HEROINE OF FICTION?

- ▶ This is not going to sound very learned, but I read many Nancy Drew books when I was young and they taught me women can do anything. As a young immigrant girl, I realized, because of Nancy, that I didn't have to live the 'old world' way.

#### WHAT IS IT THAT YOU MOST DISLIKE?

- ▶ Dishonesty—whether it's being intentionally misleading or misleading by omission.

## PRACTICE:

### WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO PRACTICE LAW?

- ▶ I graduated from high school in 1970 at a time when women's options were somewhat limited. My high school social studies teacher supported my interest in government and politics and kept suggesting I could be a lawyer. When I expressed interest, many people told me I couldn't become a lawyer because I was a woman – which made me want to do it even more.

### WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST CLIENT ACHIEVEMENT?

- ▶ We had a client in a certain industry that was facing a huge tax liability because of a decision that had been handed down against another company. We evaluated possible litigation and finally settled on a legislative solution that was more efficient and cost effective for that client and its industry in Indiana.

### IN WHAT AREA WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN MORE OR IMPROVE?

- ▶ Litigation. I do so much litigation today and I'd like to continue sharpening my skills. I frequently make my way to the litigation floor and ask questions to soak up their knowledge.

### WHICH OF YOUR COLLEAGUES DO YOU MOST ADMIRE?

- ▶ Mary Lisher was the first woman partner at our firm and has been a true trailblazer.

### WHAT DO YOU ENJOY ABOUT WORKING AT FAEGRE BAKER DANIELS?

- ▶ I love our clients and the wide array of businesses we represent. It makes coming to work every day great.

### WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU COULD CHANGE ABOUT THE LEGAL INDUSTRY?

- ▶ Law firms must improve their client service. The pockets of the industry that provide poor service reflect badly on all of us because businesses lump firms together in their minds. For example, one client recently told me I'm the only lawyer who gives her adequate time to review briefs before filing. She said most clients provide the draft the day before filing, while I typically give her a week or more.

### WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST CHALLENGING ABOUT YOUR AREA OF FOCUS?

- ▶ Keeping up with the never ending changes in the tax laws. It's a challenge to keep on top of the legislative, administrative and judicial developments—but we do that since it's the best way to help our clients. Luckily my entire practice group is engaged in following developments on all fronts, so we do stay up to date with the changes.

### WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST REWARDING ABOUT YOUR AREA OF FOCUS?

- ▶ The best part of my practice is learning my clients' businesses. In order to represent them well on tax issues, I need to understand how their companies work. I've enjoyed learning how companies make steel, pharmaceuticals, petroleum products, energy and other products and about the business challenges they face. It's as exciting to talk to the engineers as to the tax professionals.

### HOW HAS YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON LAW CHANGED OVER THE YEARS?

- ▶ The law always has the same challenges and rewards. I have learned to be more efficient and client focused, which comes with experience.

### WHAT IS THE BIGGEST LESSON YOU'VE LEARNED?

- ▶ A lesson my mentor J.B. King taught me: Keep your eye on the ball. The ball is your clients and their issues. It's easy to be caught up in what's going on in the firm, office politics, management roles, etc. But if you want to be successful, you've got to keep your legal work for your clients as the top priority.

### WHAT IS THE NEXT BIG PROJECT YOU'D LIKE TO TACKLE?

- ▶ My practice has always been primarily in Indiana. With our expanded firm platform, one of my goals before riding off into the sunset is to take the state and local tax (SALT) practice multistate. With the high quality of our work and caliber of clients we represent, we could be a powerful national SALT firm.