

New NALSC Board Member Stuart TenHoor chose to go to law school because his mother always said, “you like to argue.” Anyone who knows Stuart now wouldn’t think he was the argumentative type, but he admits that he likes using persuasion to “make his case.” He clarifies that he thinks persuasion is the art of helping someone figure out what really is the right answer—for them. In other words, when someone is unclear about their best career choice, he loves helping them clarify it with their job opportunities at the time.

Stuart, the youngest of four children, grew up in Grand Rapids, Michigan. His parents thought it was a great place to raise a family, and he felt safe there. They lived across the street from a large public park and Stuart sometimes spent all day there in the summers. He loved sports and competed in football, baseball, and basketball. He got some “street cred” that way because all his siblings were accomplished in sports and known throughout the community.

In fact, it was basketball that got Stuart to go straight to law school right after his college graduation. He says he might have waited a few years and worked first, but he had won an NCAA scholarship for basketball that paid for his first year of law school, but only if he went directly to graduate school. Stuart chose William & Mary Law School because, as a college history major, he thought that since it was halfway between Yorktown and Jamestown, “it must be a cool place.” Plus, always modest, he says, “it was the best law school I could get into.”

After earning his JD in 1979, Stuart worked on Capitol Hill with the U.S. Senate Labor & Human Resources Committee as a professional staff member. He loved building his rolodex and becoming a subject matter expert. He also enjoyed what he calls “the 3D chess of congressional politics.” Stuart says it all was great training for becoming a legal search consultant.

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He then worked in several quasi-legal positions, and finally in a large law firm (now DLA Piper), but rarely truly loved lawyering. However, Stuart did love landing business in a consulting firm and going after client work while in practice.

In the mid-1980s Stuart received a medical diagnosis that changed his life: He had a large, benign brain tumor. It was removed two weeks later in a 12+-hour surgery. That “woke me up and I left law practice for legal search a year later,” and he never looked back.

After almost a decade honing his legal search skills with larger search firms, Stuart started his own search firm. He’s well-known nationally for his specialty focus of placing FDA lawyers in law firms and corporations and with other types of employers, including the FDA itself. Stuart loves helping people clarify their goals broadly and then surveying the available opportunities. He enjoys preparing lawyers for interviews, especially when he knows the interviewers well—which he quite often does.

Stuarts says, “I love working with lawyer’s careers in part because I didn’t flourish as a lawyer in my own career. I know what doesn’t work and, therefore, what working well looks like. I’m a good leader (he was captain of his college basketball team and president of his high school senior class), and can help guide and facilitate smart career actions.”

Board Member Profile: Stuart TenHoor, Esq.

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Stuart’s words of wisdom for dealing with the inevitable frustrations and setbacks that occur in legal recruiting: “I’ve learned, over the years, to realize that I generally do a good job. So, when bad things happen (deal gone south, for instance), I know that something good is just around the corner!”

The best advice Stuart ever received about recruiting was: “you make your money on the phone, not shuffling papers.” If he were to start his search career today, he would strive to be a better administrator of his practice because, he says, he’s missed deals because he didn’t do consistent outreach to all prospective candidates.

On the personal front, Stuart has a son and a daughter, both in their 20s, who live in the Washington, DC area. He’s active in his Unitarian Universalist congregation in Columbia, MD and has been active in NAMI (National Alliance for Mental Illness) for many years and on the Board of Directors of the Maryland chapter.

The books Stuart found most influential are “What Color is Your Parachute” by Richard Bolles and “Get SH*T Done” by Jeffrey Gitomer, both for obvious reasons, and “Siddhartha” which, Stuart says, gives “such an insightful/meaningful unfolding of finding the guiding principles of life.” He’s not always serious, however, and his favorite TV shows, movies, and music are “Ted Lasso,” “Silver Linings Playbook” and he recently saw the Rolling Stones in concert and still loves their music.

You can’t argue with that.

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