

# WAKE FOREST JURIST

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*Pro Humanitate*



HOW DAVID DAGGETT (JD '85) BALANCES IT ALL



Above and following page: David Daggett (JD '85) at the Safe Sober Teen Center

If ever there was someone who seems to have it all figured out, it's David Daggett (JD '85).

But that assuredness is by no means accidental, or pure luck. It has resulted from a clear, foundational life philosophy. From his incredibly successful law firm, to his deep and broad service to the community, to his devotion to his family and his health, Daggett is intentional about how he spends his time and energy.

"My son, who is now at the age where he wants to have those deep philosophical talks with dad, asked me once 'How do you do so much and still have time for our family?'" It's a great question, and one that many ponder about Daggett. How does he do so much?

"It's simple," he says. "I've architected my life using this concept I call the 'Four Anchors.'"

The Four Anchors is Daggett's personal approach to building a meaningful, purpose-driven life. He believes a life consists of four distinct areas: professional, physical, family/social, and spiritual. By integrating these four anchors and maximizing your time, you can strengthen each anchor and create stability and balance.

"For example," says Daggett, an avid athlete and competitor, "when the kids were young, I'd wake up early in the morning and bike to my in-laws' house a few hours away. My wife and children would meet me there as I was arriving, and we'd have family time. It's about doing things concurrently and making the most of your time."





Time seems infinite when you talk to Daggett. He wakes up at 4:30 a.m. for his morning swim, during which he meditates and makes a mental list of what he wants to accomplish that day. Then it's off to the law offices of Daggett Shuler, which he co-founded with fellow Wake Forest Law alumnus Griff Shuler (JD '94).

Since Daggett established the firm, which specializes in personal injury, disability, and workers' compensation, it has become a cornerstone of the Winston-Salem community. The firm's philosophy, "We help people through situations that many times are the worst events they've experienced in their lives," underscores Daggett's personal commitment to serving others for 40 years as a local attorney.

When Daggett turned 50, he decided to dedicate one-third of his productive, professional time toward community service. And when it comes to serving the community, rather than focusing his energy on one specific cause or issue, the throughline for Daggett has been his love of people—that is the one thing that his incredibly varied philanthropic activities have in common.

Leveraging his legal expertise, he has served as president of the Forsyth County Bar Association, as a member of the Board of Governors of the North Carolina Bar Association, and on the 21st Judicial District Bar Association. A former wrestler himself, Daggett coaches high school wrestling. He speaks at local middle and high schools, volunteers in various capacities at New Philadelphia Moravian Church, and is a frequent emcee at charity events, including the annual holiday party for the Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Orthopedic Surgery & Rehabilitation Department. He serves on the board of the American Heart Association - Triad and for Willie Mason & Friends, a community-based choir. Daggett Shuler also sponsors numerous events throughout the year.

"I wanted to start a law firm that has a distinct impact on both people and on the community. That's part of our mission and ethos," says Daggett. "I'm fortunate that everyone on our team is on the same page with regards to those ideals, because my hope is that our firm's legacy will prevail long after I'm gone."

Perusing Daggett's LinkedIn profile is a humbling experience that not only inspires you to do more, but to be better. It also makes you question whether Daggett sleeps at all.

Among his countless contributions to the community, perhaps the one he is most proud of is the founding of the Safe Sober Program.

In its 35th year, Safe Sober is the largest and longest running privately funded initiative of its kind in the United States (and likely, the world). It began as Safe Sober Prom Night, which was an initiative aimed at creating awareness among teens of the dangers of drug and alcohol consumption, especially during the time between prom and graduation. The program encouraged students to sign a pledge agreeing to remain sober and make good decisions on prom night and during that period.

A few years ago, the program expanded beyond prom night to operate year-round and target middle school students as well. “Society has changed, and the issues we were seeing with high school students, we now see with middle school students,” says Daggett.

“Our goal is to raise awareness of the dangers of drug and alcohol use and to create an atmosphere of positive peer pressure amidst the negative peer pressure our youth are bombarded with. We want to encourage the community to collectively ‘wrap their arms’ around these young people, and help put them on the road to success.”

Over 50 local high schools participate in the program, and more than 600,000 students have gone through the program. Each student who signs the pledge and participates in the Safe Sober Program, which includes events, presentations, and other activities, receives a special t-shirt, which is designed by a different teen each year. “We now have generations of students in the Triad who have gone through the Safe Sober Program, and that truly is one of the crowning achievements of my career.”

The most recent addition to the Safe Sober Program is the Safe Sober Teen Center, a collaboration between Daggett Shuler and the William G. White, Jr. YMCA. The Safe Sober Teen Center provides a safe space, enriched learning and activities, and mentorship for teens. It integrates the values of the Safe Sober Program and of the YMCA, ensuring that teens have a place to go after school where they can be surrounded by positive influences.

“I’ve seen firsthand how bad choices can really throw a person’s life off track. There are often devastating consequences,” says Daggett.

“Kids need trusted adults in their lives to show an interest in them and get involved—to believe in them—and help put them on a positive path. It’s easy to write a check. It’s much harder to put in the time and effort and show up for these kids. But it makes all the difference.”

In addition to his devotion to his charitable work, his career, and his family (he has been happily married for nearly 30 years and has three adult children), Daggett is deeply committed to his physical and mental health. He is a 34-time IRONMAN finisher over 44 consecutive years and has competed in 220 triathlons. He and his daughter recently competed in the Escape from Alcatraz Triathlon, combining two of the Four Anchors—physical and family/social.

Unsurprisingly, Daggett’s love of people has made him not only a prolific philanthropist, but a talented lawyer. He believes that inter-

personal skills are key to succeeding in the legal profession. “The most critical thing you do as a lawyer is to advise and counsel your clients,” he says. “You need to be able to gain their trust, and that requires the ability to meaningfully engage with others.”

While he was born with those innate people skills, he cultivated many other key lawyering skills during his time at Wake Forest Law. “It goes without saying that I received an excellent education at Wake,” Daggett explains. “But I also developed strong relationships with my professors, like Butch Covington and the late Ralph Peeples.” He has stayed in touch with many of them throughout the years.

But one of the most impactful aspects of attending Wake Forest Law was that it brought him to this city that he cares so deeply about. After receiving his bachelor of arts from Indiana State University, he moved down to Winston-Salem—and he never left. He obtained his JD, opened his law firm, and set down roots, which have grown and spread and strengthened everything around him.

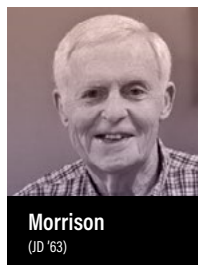
As good as Winston-Salem has been to Daggett, he has paid it forward to his community in spades. “It’s what I love to do,” says Daggett. “Helping people is in my DNA.”

And it wouldn’t be surprising at all if that DNA was superhuman.



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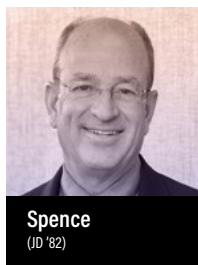




**Morrison**  
(JD '63)



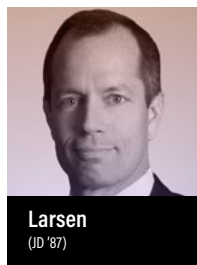
**Smyth**  
(JD '81)



**Spence**  
(JD '82)



**Grella**  
(JD '85)



**Larsen**  
(JD '87)



**Acree**  
(JD '82, JD '89)

## 1960s

**Fred Morrison (JD '63)** was honored by the North Carolina Office of Administrative Hearings with the renaming of a courtroom to the "Fred G. Morrison Jr. Courtroom." Morrison recently retired after 60 years of practicing law. He retired as senior administrative law judge after 37 years in the Office of Administrative Hearings.

**Leo Daughtry ('62, JD '65)** wrote his first novel, *Talmadge Farm*. The book is set on a North Carolina tobacco farm in the 1950s and follows three families navigating the changing culture in the state. Daughtry's experiences growing up among tobacco fields in Sampson County, NC, inspired the book. Daughtry practiced law in Smithfield, NC, and served in the North Carolina General Assembly for 28 years, both in the Senate and in the House, where he was majority and minority leader.

**Dallas Clark ('65, JD '68)** received a runner-up award in the 2024 Los Angeles Book Festival for his most recent legal thriller, *The Mind of Dan MacAvoy*. His debut novel, *The Investigation Officer's File*, was a finalist in the 2024 American Legacy Book Awards contest. Clark is a retired attorney in Greenville, NC.

## 1970s

**R. Lee Farmer (JD '73, P '00)** was appointed to the North Carolina Ethics Commission, which oversees the conduct of more than 7,000 legislators, judicial officers, and certain state employees. He is a past president of the North Carolina Association of Municipal Attorneys and North Carolina Association of County Attorneys. Farmer has practiced law in Caswell County, NC, since 1973.

**Roy A. Archbell Jr. ('71, JD '74)** wrote his third book, *Beaufort County, North Carolina Ancestors*. He received the 2024 Award for Excellence in Publishing in the family history category from the North Carolina Genealogical Society. Archbell practiced

law on the Outer Banks for 40 years until retiring in 2015. He lives outside Roanoke, VA, with his wife, Mary "Charlie" Archbell.

**James K. Dorsett III (JD '77)** received the John B. McMillan Distinguished Service Award from the North Carolina State Bar. He is a past president of the State Bar and the State Bar Foundation. Dorsett has practiced law at Smith Anderson for 45 years and was president of Food Runners Collaborative Inc. and the Rotary Club of Raleigh.

**Reece Saunders ('74, JD '77)** received The Order of the Long Leaf Pine, North Carolina's highest award for service. Saunders was district attorney in Anson, Richmond, and Scotland counties for 14 years before retiring in 2024. He was also in private practice and was a district court judge in the 1980s.

**Steve Shuff (JD '78)** is co-founder of The NOAH (No One Alone or Hungry) Foundation of Ohio, which provides a free Christmas Day dinner to residents of Seneca County, OH. Last Christmas, the organization celebrated 17 years. Shuff is a longtime judge for the Seneca County Common Pleas Court.

**Bill Webb ('75, JD '78)** received The Order of the Long Leaf Pine, North Carolina's highest award for service. He practiced law for 45 years and was the lawyer for Richmond County, NC. He is also owner of The Webb Farm in Ellerbe, NC.

## 1980s

**Dan A. Boone (JD '80)** retired from the practice of law. Boone, also a retired CPA, established a successful estate and trust practice with Black, Boone & Brasch P.A. in Concord, NC. He previously was CFO of Food Lion in Salisbury, NC, and CFO and corporate counsel of CFRA in Concord, NC. He hopes to improve his golf game and spend more time with his wife, Teena Boone, as they visit his two sons and their families more frequently.

**David B. Rea (JD '80, P '13, '20)** was inducted into the Marquis Who's Who biographical registry,

which recognizes accomplished individuals from every field. Rea is president of Salem Investment Counselors in Winston-Salem. He has five children and nine grandchildren.

**Ted Smyth (JD '81)** received the 2024 Core Value Award from Cranfill Sumner LLP for his embodiment of the law firm's core values of client service, teamwork, and reputation. He is of counsel in the firm's Raleigh office. He was also named to the 2025 edition of The Best Lawyers in America in bet-the-company litigation, commercial litigation, insurance law, and personal injury litigation (defendants and plaintiffs).

**Eric R. Spence (JD '82)** was included in the 2025 *North Carolina Super Lawyers* magazine and the 2025 edition of The Best Lawyers in America in commercial real estate law. He is of counsel at Ragsdale Liggett in Raleigh.

**Wayne Johnson (JD '84)** is director of higher education at the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority, the agency that administers the state's grant, scholarship, and student loan programs for post-secondary education.

**David A. Senter Sr. ('81, JD '84, P '07, P '12)** was profiled in North Carolina Lawyers Weekly's Power List for construction law. He was also inducted as a fellow in the American College of Construction Lawyers. Senter is senior counsel at law firm Maynard Nexsen in Raleigh. He has 40 years of experience in construction law and is an adjunct professor at Wake Forest Law.

**Rhonda Kahan Amoroso (JD '85, P '97)** is CEO of simply francis publishing co., a publishing company that combines aspects of traditional and self-publishing, in Wrightsville Beach, NC.

**David Daggett (JD '85)** completed his 10th Ironman World Championship (2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike ride, and 26.2-mile run) in Hawaii in October. He first completed the Hawaii Ironman in 1990. Daggett is managing partner of Daggett Shuler Attorneys at Law in Winston-Salem.