

Attorney Willie Powells: Finding His Passion in Personal Injury Law

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Willie Powells has been the president and CEO of the Law Offices of Willie D. Powells III & Associates PLLC for over 10 years, but the journey to owning his own firm was a winding road of self-discovery and lessons learned.

Powells knew from an early age he would pursue a prestigious career. Doctor. Engineer. Lawyer. Concert Violinist. In his yearbook he even mentioned wanting to be a medical doctor with aspirations to become a brain surgeon, but it wasn't until his college experience that he knew a profession in law was the right choice.



After graduating from Booker T. Washington High School for Engineering Professions with honors, Powells received full scholarships to several universities and decided to attend Drexel University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on a full chemical engineering scholarship. While attending Drexel, he began a fortunate streak of meeting and working with some very influential people, all playing significant roles in guiding Powells to where he is today.

One of the first "geniuses" Powell had the pleasure of meeting was Double Doctorate MD PhD Cato T. Laurencin, who was a graduate from Princeton, MIT, Harvard and other prestigious institutions, and was Powells' chemical engineer professor at Drexel University.

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"I had a professor who was an African American male, like me, that had worked his way up to be a successful professor and chemical engineer, orthopedic surgeon and world-class scientist all at the same time," Powells said.

"I had the opportunity to work in his scientific laboratory, and since the day I met him, he was someone who always pushed me to my limit, telling me to step up my game or go to the next level. He helped me see I could be greater and do more."

"I chose to work with ExxonMobil that summer, and I am so glad I did," Powells said. "It was a great experience, and I made so many wonderful connections that I still have today. But, it also helped me realize that corporate law was not something I could see myself doing forever."

Having such a strong science background, he then pursued Patent and Intellectual Property Law, which is an area of law that protects scientific studies from being claimed by others. He landed a work opportunity with one of the only women-owned patent law firms in the City of Houston, one that boasted well-known, respectable clients such as AT&T. This allowed Powells to continue his fortunate streak of meeting supportive and influential people. This time it was Ms. Wendy Buskop.

"While I was at [Buskop Law Group], I had a conversation with [Buskop] expressing to her I didn't know if this was something I could do long-term," Powells said. "I didn't know if I could ever fully express myself at this job. I felt like I was in a box, and she said, 'if there's something else that you want to do, you've got to just do it, you have to see what's really for you.'"

Powells went on to work for a larger law firm to gain some litigation experience. It was there that he had a major realization.

"I received a phone call from my sister, asking me a very basic question regarding a law issue, and I did not know the answer," he said. "Here I was, working at this huge law firm,

and professor, orthopedic surgeon and world-class scientist all at the same time," Powells said. "I had the opportunity to work in his scientific laboratory, and since the day I met him, he was someone who always pushed me to my limit, telling me to step up my game or go to the next level. He helped me see I could be greater and do more."

After several exams including the LSAT, GMAT and MCAT, personality tests and a self-assessment, Powells decided that becoming a medical professional like his mom was not the dream career he was after. Being an attorney was a much better fit, similar to his uncle who was a judge in the Chicago area. So, keeping with his ambitious personality, he finished school at Drexel, typically a five-year program, in just four-years with a B.S. in chemical engineering, a dual minor in biology and piano and a concentration in biomaterials and tissue engineering along with working experience, and then started applying to law schools. Naturally, he was accepted into several schools, but stuck with his plan to move back home to Houston and attended South Texas School of Law.

"I knew it would be important to go to law school in the place I intended to work," Powells said. "Being a part of the community is a big component of being a lawyer. It's about being a part of the community, networking and knowing who's who."

While in law school, Powells' plan was to gain as much experience as he possibly could, and having done so well in his first year, he received two prestigious internship opportunities that summer, one from JP Morgan Chase and one from ExxonMobil. He chose ExxonMobil and began trying his hand at corporate law.

making huge checks, and I don't know the answer to a basic law question. That was a very eye-opening experience for me. This is when I decided to go off on my own and become a general practitioner. Along the way I worked at several boutique law firms and did a little tax, family, criminal and injury law, that way if someone did have a question about something, I would definitely be able to give them the answer."

Powells received his first commercial car accident case, his first case where he had to be the one to figure out how to work the case, manage the case and support his client. He loved every bit of it and knew he had finally found his passion.

Fast forward to today and Powells has not changed his mind one bit, if anything, his passion for his work has grown stronger.

"It's like I never have to work a day in my life," Powells said. "While I do have to put in the work, it's not really work when you're having a great time doing it. Do we have some tough days? Yes, but the good days far outweigh them all. Every day I wake up looking forward to working on my cases. I've had



Powells pictured with his sister.



the chance to work with so many different lawyers, including the well-known Willie Gary. I get to go to so many different places, and we now have cases all over Texas."

Despite such infinite success at the Law Offices of Willie D. Powells III & Associates PLLC, a multi-award-winning firm that boasts million-dollar verdicts and a staff that genuinely cares for its clients, Powells has remained humble, continuing to give all the credit to God. And as for what is next, Powells says anything is possible.

"I don't see a limit, I just see a direction, and that is to keep moving forward."

Looking for an attorney who cares about his profession, the people he serves and achieving results? Call Willie Powells today!

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