

## HOT-BUTTON ISSUES

www.buttonlawfirm.com | 214-888-2216

4315 W. Lovers Lane, Suite A, Dallas, TX 75209 | 1900 W. Illinois Avenue, Suite 101, Midland, TX 79701

## 'YOU HAVE TO EARN EVERYTHING'

## Life Lessons From My Favorite Retiree

A few months ago, I spoke at my mom's retirement party. We were standing in a local event venue surrounded by her friends and coworkers from Texas Sprinkler, the company she'd helped my dad run for the last 15 years. It felt surreal that she was finally getting a break, but like I said in my speech to the crowd, she earned it.

My mom is one of the most hardworking people I know. She never backed down from a challenge if it meant bettering her family and herself. These are a just a few of the amazing things my mom has done over the years:

- Learned English as a second language at age 14
- Put herself through high school by working two jobs around the clock
- Put herself through college, earned two college degrees on almost no sleep (she worked fast food at night, studied from midnight to 4 a.m., took a nap, and got up at dawn to be the school janitor)
- Walked the stage to get her college diploma with my sister Roxana in her belly

*"I'll never forget the time I skipped a week of piano lessons and practice to play basketball. I was the starting point guard on my high school's varsity team, and when my mom found out what I'd done, she dragged me right out of practice."*

- Worked as a computer programmer for 15 years at a time when there were almost no women in STEM
- Owned and managed two restaurants (one Mexican restaurant, one pizza place) with my dad
- Lived out of a hotel three hours away from her family to learn how to be a better restaurateur
- Taught herself how to be the CFO and office manager at Texas Sprinkler and ran a tight ship for 15 years

Even running on no sleep, with 2 a.m. wakeups and endless hours on her feet, my mom managed to be a mom, too. She showed up for my basketball games, drove me and Roxana around, helped us with our homework, and told us she was proud of us. She also taught us how to wash our own clothes, work a vacuum, and tackle every project with hard work, commitment, and dedication.

As a kid, I didn't always understand this discipline. I'll never forget the time I skipped a week of piano lessons and practice to play basketball. I was the starting point guard on my high school's varsity team, and when my mom found out what I'd done, she dragged me right out of practice.

"You're not playing another basketball game until you make up the practice time you missed AND make up your lessons. No discussion," she said.



My coach and I both begged her to let me play, but she wasn't having it. I ended up spending hours on the piano *and* running sprints at practice as a punishment for missing a game! Looking back on that experience as an adult, I can see that my mom was a true leader. She gave me the tough love I needed to get my work done and didn't let my head get too big.

At my mom's retirement party, it hit me just how much she had sacrificed for our family over the years. My parents, and especially my mom, made me the person and the lawyer I am today. She passed on to me her passion for self-improvement, her work ethic, her love of learning, and her philosophy that "you have to earn everything." I'll never be able to thank her enough.

In my work, I don't take the success of a single case for granted. Instead, I put my head down and work hard, just like I did at the piano and on the basketball court. If I've helped you, I hope that after reading this, you'll join me in raising a glass to my mom. No one deserves retirement more!

*-Russell Button*

# HAPPY WORKIVERSARY, ROSIE!

OUR LITIGATION PARALEGAL CELEBRATES 4 YEARS WITH BLF

When I walked into my very first interview at BLF in 2018, I was shocked by what I found. After years working in personal injury law, I thought I knew how law firms worked. But a few minutes with Russell showed me that BLF was different.

When he told me how he operates — how everyone is involved in every single case and works each as a team — I thought, “Wow, that is such a good concept!” It was one of the things that drew me to coming on board.

Back then, the whole firm was squeezed into a tiny two-person office, and there were just four of us on the team. Helping the firm grow from that to the large team and beautiful office we have today has been just amazing!

I’ve grown a lot over the last four years, too. I learned to collaborate effectively and bring a new level of passion and attention

to detail to our cases. I also became a leader on our paralegal team. I’ve taken on more responsibilities and always jump in to help wherever I can. Looking back, I’m proud of how far I’ve come — but I didn’t get here alone.

I’ve learned so much about the right way to work cases because of Russell and Ashley. I owe all of my growth to them. I don’t feel I would be in the position I’m in or be the person I am today without their guidance. They are always thinking of ways to do things better, and while we each have our own roles as part of the team, Russell allows us all to be leaders.

BLF has also inspired me to create a better work-life balance. I’ve always been the kind of person who hates taking time off because I don’t want to pass my responsibilities on to anyone else, but I’ve gotten better. In 2021, I went on trips with



Rosie and her husband, Orlando, on the Riverwalk in San Antonio

my family to California and Cancun, Mexico. We had a lot of fun exploring the adventure parks, swimming, snorkeling, and going zip lining. I’m not sure I ever would have made those memories if I had another job.

If you’re reading this, thank you for being a part of my BLF journey.

*-Rosie Melendez, Litigation Paralegal*



## OUR FIRM IS ... A MORGUE?

### The Story Behind ‘Autopsy Everything’

You’re probably used to hearing the word “autopsy” in the context of TV shows like “CSI: Miami” and “NCIS.” But when Russell says we “autopsy everything” at our firm, he’s not talking about opening up a body to find the cause of death — he’s talking about the *other* definition of the word.

In business, an autopsy is “a critical examination, evaluation, or assessment of someone or something past.” Here at BLF, we don’t let a single meeting or case go by without an autopsy. We always pause to analyze how it went, what we did right, and what we could have done better. Sometimes this happens in one-on-one meetings between a team member and a department leader, and sometimes we meet in groups to figure it all out.

“We autopsy everything we do. Every decision, phone call, letter, email, deposition, client meeting, and prep session,” Russell says. “We reflect on every single thing we do and every single step within

it, from the words we choose to the sequence we put them in, the tone we use, and our facial expressions. It’s all important, and we want to find ways to get better and better for our clients.”

Autopsies help us learn from successes *and* failures. When we get justice for a client, we autopsy it to understand why things went well. Then, we use our list to replicate that success! When we fail, we sit down to figure out what went wrong so we don’t make the same mistakes twice. After each autopsy the team logs what they learned in our firm’s case management system. They tag everyone involved and we go over the biggest lessons in our monthly and quarterly refresher sessions.

A lot of lawyers shy away from autopsying their failures because it hurts to do it, but that’s a big mistake. You’re doomed to repeat history if you don’t understand it! Here at BLF, we’re not afraid to face down our failures. The more we do it, the fewer mistakes we’ll make, and the more success we’ll have for our clients in the future.

So, next time you hear the phrase “autopsy everything,” don’t be alarmed. It’s not a morgue thing — it’s a good thing!

# LOOK OUT, UTEP — JUAN IS ON HIS WAY!

## Meet Our Favorite Soon-to-Be-Doctor

Our team doesn't get the opportunity to attend college graduations all that often, but when we heard Juan Sanchez was about to earn his diploma from Schreiner University, we knew we had to be there. Ashley and Russell jumped in the car and drove the five hours to Kerrville!

Juan's mom, Claudia, is one of our team's most loved clients, and when she told us about Juan, his story blew us away. Juan graduated from high school with an associate degree and a wrestling scholarship to Schreiner. He couldn't wait to go to school and "give his mom another degree," following in the footsteps of his brother and sister. But from day one, the odds were stacked against him.

"I jumped right in there with a bunch of juniors and seniors at the age of 18," he remembers. "I was this little kid coming out of high school, taking classes with 21- and 23-year-olds. Everyone was looking at me like, 'Who is this guy?'"

Juan didn't let the sideways looks stop him. He was determined to earn a bachelor's of exercise science, fitness, and wellness, go to physical therapy school, and become the first doctor in his family.

He was inspired by his aunt, who suffers from a mysterious but debilitating disease.

"To this day they don't know what the disease is, but it numbs her whole body down. She can't walk and she talks very slowly. Seeing her struggle pushed me forward. How can I help her? How can I cure her?" Juan asks. He also wants to help his fellow athletes. "If they ever suffer an injury or surgery, I'll be able to help them recover, push themselves to the max, and build themselves back up."

Juan's graduation was a huge success! Now, he has his sights set on the nationally ranked PT program at The University of Texas at El Paso. He didn't get one of the rare slots last semester, so he's spending the winter shadowing athletic trainers and earning certifications in personal training and strength and conditioning coaching. Next semester, he'll throw his name in the hat again.

"I'm not going to stop," he says. "You can't give up, you know?"

Look out, UTEP — Juan is coming for you!



# BLEF HIGHLIGHT REEL

Jacqueline at the Dallas Mavericks/Phoenix Suns game with her husband and family



Ashley, her husband, Calvin, and friends celebrating their friends' wedding

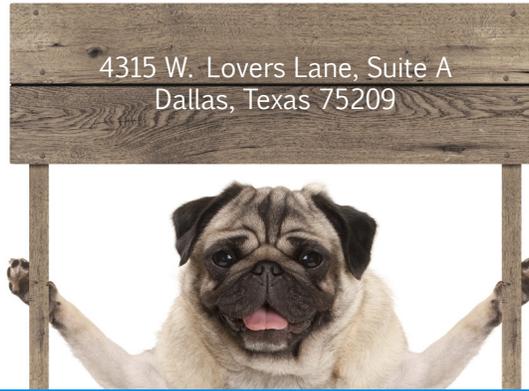


Russell fishing on his New Year trip to the Florida Keys

## CLIENT REVIEW

*"I am a lawyer in California. I met Russell Button and Ashley Washington in Florida at a lawyer seminar conducted by a renowned trial lawyer. In a room full of accomplished trial lawyers from all over the country, Russell and Ashley stood out. They offered insight on cases that few could have conceived and talked about their clients in a way that made me feel like they truly care about each and every family they are tasked to obtain justice for. When a family reached out to me because their family member was killed in Texas, they were the first people I thought of to contact for help. We worked together to help the family pick up the pieces after the death of their loved one. With Russell and Ashley's guidance, we were able to get some closures and financial recovery for the family in a matter of months. They helped this struggling family by relieving the financial stresses associated with losing the only breadwinner in the household, but more importantly, they made the family feel heard and appreciated. The Button Law Firm's compassion and desire to help people who need it most is unparalleled. I cannot recommend them enough."*

*-Slav*



PRST STD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
BOISE, ID  
PERMIT 411

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Raise a Glass to Mrs. Button
- 2 Rosie Hits a Major Milestone  
What BLF and a Morgue Have in Common
- 3 Meet Juan — a Friend of the Firm and Soon-to-Be-Doctor  
BLF Highlight Reel
- 4 BLF Holds a Drunk Driver Accountable

## BLF SECURES JUSTICE FOR A FAMILY IN PAIN

### Giving the Smiths Hope for the Future!

Before the accident, Sam and Jess Smith and their daughter, Claire,\* were a happy, active family. They loved to go fishing and hiking, visit local lakes, and take long road trips to see family in other states. But one drunk driver changed all of that.

Sam, Jess, and Claire were driving safely when another car appeared from nowhere and slammed into the rear of their vehicle. When the other driver stumbled out, he was so drunk that he could hardly stand. He admitted to the cops that he was too intoxicated to drive. Worse, they discovered his blood alcohol level was 0.162% — over double the legal limit.

All three of the Smiths were badly injured in the wreck, and EMTs rushed them to a local medical center. The doctors treated Sam for a head injury, an injury to the left shoulder, and back muscle spasms. Jess also suffered a head injury and muscle spasms, and Claire was diagnosed with a back injury and muscle strain.

The whole family spent months recovering in physical therapy, but they are still in significant pain that keeps them from moving much. Worse, Claire was traumatized by the crash — she hates

getting in the car and gets so anxious and nauseous that she has thrown up on several rides. A road trip is out of the question. The Smiths' hiking, fishing, and traveling days are over.



Things looked very dark for the Smiths at this point, but then a ray of light broke through: They found our firm. We worked hard to hold the drunk driver accountable, compiling an extensive list of the Smiths' injuries and the emotional and mental pain they suffered. We took our demand to the drunk driver's insurance company and we successfully recovered enough to help this family get the help they needed.

The settlement the Smiths received can't bring back their old lives or undo the wreck, but it will help pay for their medical bills and get them closure on what happened to them.

*\*These names have been changed to protect client privacy.*