



Front Row: Cathy Cralle Jones, Bryan Brice Back row: Matt Quinn, E. Warren Kuhn

Neil Boyd Photography



THE LAW OFFICES OF F. BRYAN BRICE, JR.

Protecting The Environment Through The Law

By Bob Friedman

Bryan Brice was part of the Redskins coaching staff that won the Super Bowl. To clarify, these undefeated Redskins played in the 11-12 age division of the Raleigh City League in 2013. As assistant coach, Brice teaches the same values to his son, Stephen and his teammates that he brings to his law firm, “Work hard, have good sportsmanship and follow the rules and always try to do your best.”

The Law Office of F. Bryan Brice is a five-member Raleigh-based practice, with Robert Gelblum of counsel, that specializes in environmental law cases across the state in areas such as groundwater contamination, leaking underground storage tanks, Superfund cases, Brownfields redevelopment, permitting and regulatory matters including wetlands and issues relating to agricultural operations. The firm recently represented Greenpeace in a renewable energy case. “We represent companies and property owners in compliance matters who are trying to follow the rules and regulations,” Brice said.

The Wilson County native attended UNC for his undergraduate degree and his Juris Doctor. While in undergrad and law school, he found his calling in environmental law. “I love our legal framework,” Brice said. “I felt like I had the opportunity to help protect the environment and help clients who encounter

environmental issues through the regulatory system. It’s a way for me to make a difference.”

Following graduation, Brice spent a year clerking for North Carolina Supreme Court Justice John Webb. “It was a fantastic experience,” he said. “He was so smart, and such a kind, caring man. He taught me about attention to detail and the love of the law. I am forever indebted to him.”

Brice spent four years with the Environmental Protection Agency as a staff attorney in Washington, D.C. and in California working on water and Superfund issues. He then worked for four years handling environmental issues representing NC DOT in the North Carolina Attorney General’s office before starting his own practice in 2000.

“ARE YOU ERIN BROCKOVICH?”

Brice laughs at the question, but quickly adds that he handled a case referred from Masry & Vittoe, the firm where Brockovich was employed. The case involved a post office employee who was disabled after being sprayed twice by a crop dusting airplane while working her rural route.

In 2011, Brice’s firm worked with a client and local citizens in Morehead City, N.C. to block a proposed sulfur smelting

plant. Residents were worried about the impact the potential smell might have on tourism as well as themselves. The plant, to be built by PCS Phosphate on the Morehead waterfront, was one permit away from approval when the firm and its clients prevailed. Brice is proud of that victory. “That’s part of why we come to work every day.”

The firm is presently representing clients in a Superfund case involving PCBs in and around Lake Crabtree in Morrisville. The now-closed Ward Transformer Co. dumped carcinogenic PCBs on the property, closing in the 1990s. The cleanup bill could exceed \$75 million dollars. “The lake is so big that I don’t think the water is contaminated at a level that is above regulatory standards,” Brice said. He doubts there is any danger to boaters on the popular lake, but he suggests fishermen not eat anything they catch in the lake based upon advice from the State Health Department.

Brice sees a number of environmental issues facing North Carolina in the coming years ranging from development of contaminated properties, to coal ash plants statewide, to fracking. One of the biggest challenge facing the Triangle and the state over the next five-15 years, he says, involves the clash of expanding development versus water quality and quantity, “There’s just got to be a way that you can grow and expand our economy, but do so in a manner that protects the environment,” Brice said. “If we don’t have a clean, abundant source of water, businesses are not going to come here anyway and families won’t want to live here.” The firm monitors laws, draft regulations, and cases addressing water issues.

Bryan Brice has spent some of his time away from the office working on environmental projects. He is a board member of the UNC Institute for the Environment, the North Carolina Bar Association’s environmental section and other conservationist groups.

COACH B

Brice says it’s a challenge balancing his practice and spending time with his wife, Carson, and their three kids, Stephen, 12, Minta, 10 and Cordelia, 8. He places a high value on being able to spend time with his family and gives the members of the firm the same flexibility to be with their families. “Part of the joy of having a small practice is having a family and being able to work on environmental issues that are important to us and important to the community,” Brice said. “I’m blessed in that regard. And to have such a committed, hard working group here with me.”

Brice reels off a list of outside interests that include tennis, soccer, skiing and music as well as coaching his kid’s teams. “Kid’s sports are a fantastic outlet - a great teaching and learning experience on a lot of levels,” Brice said.

Just as Brice focuses on the fundamentals when he coaches kids, so too does he focus on the fundamentals of environmental law. “I take my oath to follow the constitution, of both our state and the United States, very seriously,” Brice said. “Humanity has reached the point that we can destroy or ruin our own environment and living space. When you look to the future, our children and grandchildren, it’s important for us to leave the planet, and our neighborhood, better than we found it.”



Bryan Brice

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Stephen Brice, Sonny Brice, and Bryan Brice following the Super Bowl.

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