

THANK YOU!

## Referrer Spotlight:

### Jason Barnes

Jason Barnes leads The Law Offices of Jason F. Barnes, P.C. (d.b.a. The Adoption Law Firm) and is designated on the Utah Court Roster as a Master Mediator. His practice is highly focused in adoption and family law.

Jason previously served as the president of the Utah Adoption Council and is a current member of that Council. He has worked on many legislative proposals and bills and has testified before the Senate Judiciary on several occasions regarding proposed legislation affecting adoption laws.

In his adoption practice, he has represented clients in all types of adoption matters and cases, including litigation in contested adoption matters.

Jason also has extensive experience in family law cases. As part of his family law practice, Jason has been highly focused on dividing retirements incident to divorce, including, QDROs, DROs, COAPs, Railroad retirements, and Military retirements. In doing so, he has a lot of experience in litigation regarding retirement accounts and regularly advises attorneys as they prepare documents or get ready for litigation themselves.

Away from the practice of law, Jason's interests include his family, hockey (favorite team: Boston Bruins), music, and movies. He is the father of four children, all girls. Through the efforts of his long-suffering wife (of 33+ years), all children appear to be on suitable life courses, with three of them married, and one 9-year-old who keeps him young. Last, but not least, he has several grandchildren.



# Attorney Advantage

APR

2023

HELPING ATTORNEYS BUILD BETTER FIRMS SO THEY LIVE BETTER LIVES

**Getting Paid 100%: Rule #5: If your client doesn't pay or have money in trust, stop work. Stop now. Stop right now.**

Last month's Rule #4 ("Always have money in trust"), was an ultra-important step toward collecting 100% for the work you do as an attorney.

This month's Rule #5 ("If your client doesn't pay or have money in trust, stop work. Stop now. Stop right now.") reinforces and reifies Rule #4.

That's because you can have all the money in the world in your trust, but if you let your client run out of trust money, and you don't stop work until your client replenishes the retainer, you'll lose your shirt. Every time.

A really memorable way to think about this rule is this: **Get paid like a casino boss.**

A casino boss will do anything for you, even if it's illegal. But the moment you run out of money, that same casino boss won't even let you in your hotel room to retrieve your credit card to pay him.

**So, when exactly you should stop working on a case?**

The moment a client does not replenish the retainer.

**And how will you know when your client does not replenish the retainer?**

This is the \$64,000 question. You must have a collection and communication system in place that alerts you when someone doesn't pay. The easiest way to make this system happen is to put a paralegal, legal assistant, bookkeeper, etc. in charge of collections.

Collecting 100% must, must be this person's #1 job. Before everything else, this person collects. This person must be empowered to tell the attorneys to stop work on a case when a client does not pay.

Lastly, this person cannot be an attorney. Attorneys are terrible at



collecting money, so don't put them in charge of collecting money.

Here are a few more elements of a successful collection system:

1. Your client knows exactly how your payment and collection system works — and how you will stop work because of non-payment — because you have explained your system step-by-step to your client, and you have explained the system in your retainer agreement.

2. Your goal is to collect 100%. If your goal is to collect 90%, you will not create an effective system, and you will not stop work when clients don't pay.

3. Have specific dates you invoice and get paid. If the dates are variable, things will get missed and payments will not happen on a systemic basis. (Example: At Brown Family Law, we invoice on the 1st of every month, and run credit cards to replenish retainers on the 20th of every month.)

4. Have a clear trigger that stops work when payment does not happen, and then have a series of communications that inform the client and the attorney that work on the case has stopped.

5. If you oversee attorneys in your firm, enforce the work stoppage. Your attorneys, for whatever reason, will often continue to work on cases, even when you tell them to stop. You must be vigilant about this and ensure attorney do not work on a case until the client's retainer has been replenished in full.

The vast majority of the time, when a client's payment declines and you stop



It's almost summer time. Do you know where you're going on vacation? Let me plug Puerto Rico. We went for spring break and loved every minute of it.

work, the client will replenish within 24 to 72 hours.

Lastly, please understand that I am not telling you to stop work if it will materially prejudice your client. There are times you simply have to continue working, but those times are few and far between if you structure and time your cases well.

The way you deal with a situation in which you must continue work is by having a sufficiently large retainer on hand (Rule #4: Always have money in trust).

That's it for this month. Next month we'll discuss how to do less to make more.

# Brown Family Law Is Hiring!



Brown Family Law is growing and hiring another attorney (or two).

And maybe another paralegal as well.

Here are our Mission Statement, Core Values, and Vision.

## Mission Statement

We remove the fear of divorce by maximizing our clients' time with their kids and maximizing their money.

## Core Values

**1. Growth Mindset:** We employ only those with a growth mindset.

**2. Excellence:** We are all excellent at what we do because our clients depend on us, and we depend on each other.

**3. Impact:** Our work is important because it deeply affects our clients and their families, as well as our team and our families.

**4. Exclusive Focus:** We focus exclusively on divorce because we want to be the best at that one thing.

**5. Communication:** We communicate with everyone systematically, openly, honestly, and in plain English.

**6. Domination:** We have a duty and obligation to dominate our market because we serve clients better than everyone else.

## 10-Year Vision

**Brand:** Help more people successfully navigate divorce than any other law firm in America.

**Revenue:** \$75 million per year.

**People:** Create opportunity for intergenerational wealth and legal excellence for 300 Brown Family Law team members.

## How To Apply

If what I wrote above resonates with you and you are interested in applying, email Lei at [lei.b@brownfamilylaw.com](mailto:lei.b@brownfamilylaw.com).

And if you know someone who would be a great fit with our team, feel free to refer them to us.

## Recipe of the Month: Slow Cooker Honey Cinnamon Carrots

As attorneys, we're busy, so slow-cooker recipes are great. You can start these super simple carrots in the morning and eat them for dinner. And, I don't know anyone who doesn't love some sweet, cinnamon-y carrots.

## Ingredients

8 large carrots, peeled and sliced into 2-inch chunks

4 tbsp melted butter

$\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon salt

1 tbsp creamed sherry or rum or cognac or whatever liquor you like

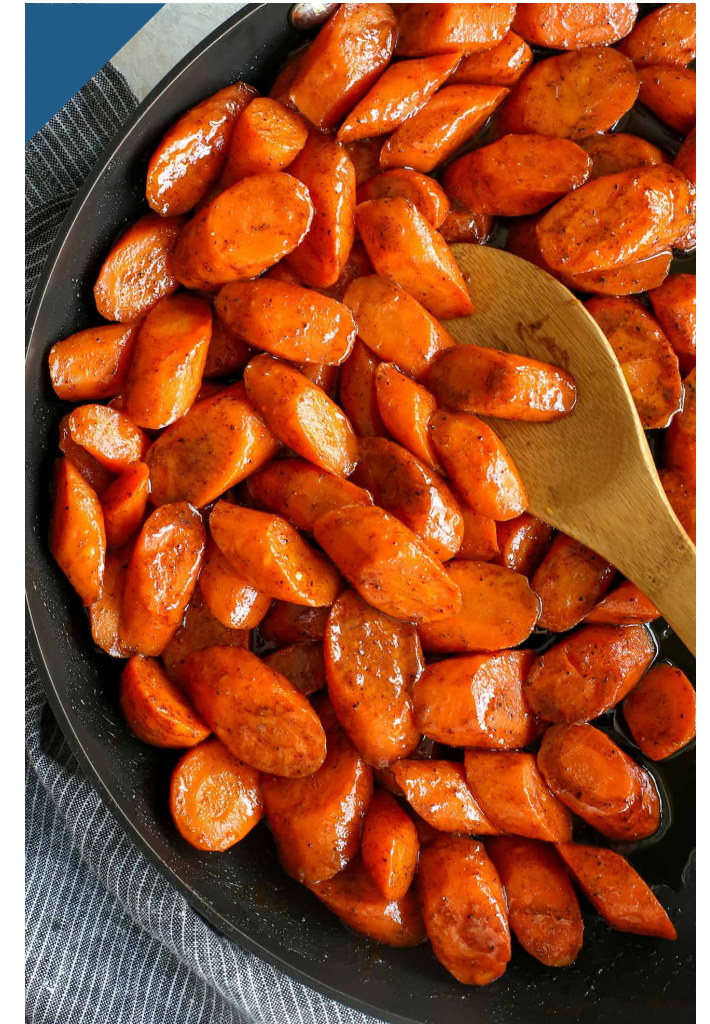
$\frac{1}{4}$  cup honey

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon pure vanilla extract

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

## Directions

- Start slow cooker on low.
- Place carrots in the bottom of slow cooker. Stir salt, honey, and liquor into the melted butter. Pour over the carrots in the slow cooker and toss until evenly coated.
- Cover and cook for 6 to 8 hours until carrots are tender.
- Drizzle cooked carrots vanilla and sprinkle with cinnamon. Gently stir until carrots are evenly coated. Let cook another 15-20 minutes, then serve.
- If the glaze is too watery, boil it in a small saucepan over high heat until reduced by half. Pour over served carrots.



## Team Spotlight: Andrew Christensen

Andrew Christensen is a 2L at the University of Utah's S.J. Quinney College of Law and Brown Family Law's very first law clerk.

He graduated Summa Cum Laude from Southern Utah University in 2021, where he worked as a heating and air-conditioning technician to support himself through school.

Andrew has a passion for family law and enjoys helping his clients navigate the legal system. He loves the genuine stories and experiences of his clients, and loves being able to assist real members of our community every day in his work. In addition to his work at BFL, he is also a Research Fellow for the University on the Colorado River Compact.

When not working or studying, Andrew loves to ride his motorcycle, cheer on the Utah Jazz, and explore the Mountain West with his dog, Ravioli, and his beautiful wife, Ashton.



**Brown Family Law  
appreciates your referrals**

We help our clients going through divorce maximize time with their children, and maximize their money

 **801-685-9999**

## Charitable Contribution Opportunity: RISE Program

In 2015, my wife, Demaree, and I lived on about \$35,000 and paid off our student loan debt, which was, let us say substantial — we have a JD and Ph.D. between the two of us.

When we made that last, ever-so-sweet loan payment, we promptly booked a family vacation for Belize.

On one of the excursions, we went to Guatemala to visit some of their pyramids. We passed through some Highland towns on the way there, and we were struck by just how subsistence the existence was.

When we got home, Demaree and I talked about how we would like to help educate kids in that part of the world as part of our charitable giving.

So, we did some research and found The Cooperative for Education (CoEd) — <https://coeduc.org/> — , which runs a program they call Rise.

Rise is an opportunity to directly sponsor the education of a student in Highland Guatemala. Without these direct sponsorships, these students could not afford schooling and would be forced to drop out. You pick the student you want to sponsor, and you receive regular updates about their progress, both from CoEd and from the student.

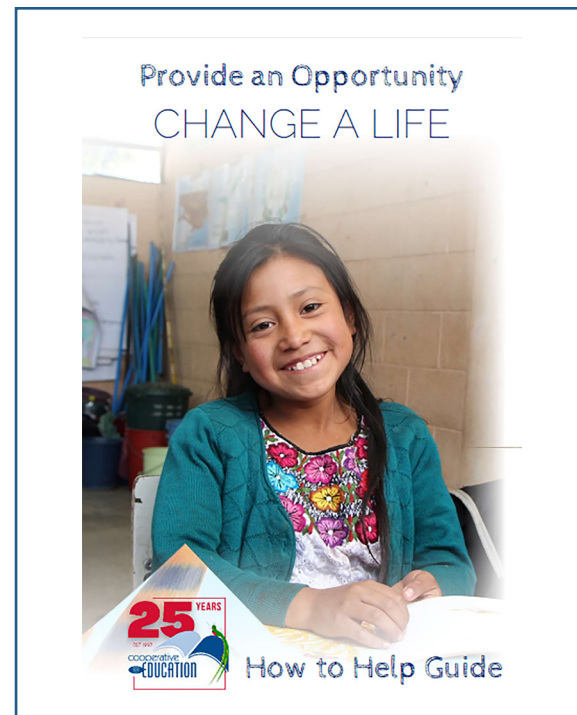
After discussion with the people at CoEd, we decided to have Brown Family Law sponsor a student. That one student quickly turned to 2, then 3, then 4, and you get the picture.

At this point, we've helped a number of children (we usually choose to children who are missing at least one parent) graduate and move on to higher education.

CoEd also offers opportunities to sponsor whole schools, textbook purchases, etc., all in Guatemala.

It's a wonderful feeling knowing that these students are able to better themselves and then return, as most do, to help better their communities.

If you personally, or your firm, is looking for a way to give back through charitable contributions, please, consider CoEd and the Rise program. It is truly life changing for these kids and communities.



### How To Contribute

1. Contribute online to the Rise students: <https://coeduc.org/rise>
2. Contact Abby Gaide, Development Director at CoEd, to discuss all contribution options (tell Abby Marco Brown sent you): 513.956.9006

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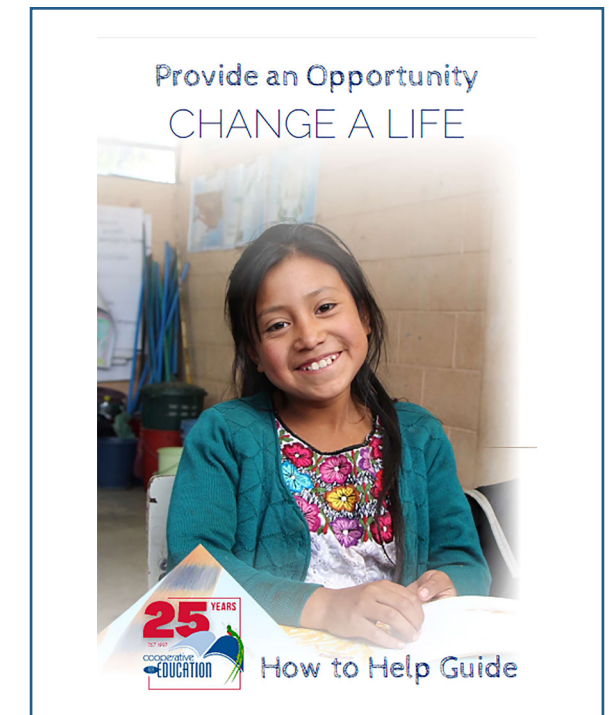
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## How to Hire A-Players for your Firm

I don't know about you, but since COVID, it's been difficult to find really good, A-level talent.

I'm convinced part of the problem was the arrival of large national and international firms that finally realized they could hire Utah attorneys, pay them Utah salaries, and bill their work out at San Francisco and New York rates.

Of course, these large firm, having over-hired during the pandemic, are now quietly laying off large quantities of attorneys to preserve profit margins. Turns out these firms don't really care about their attorneys, especially their younger attorneys — shocker, I know.

In this type of increasingly competitive environment, how can we, as solos, small firms, and medium-sized firms, attract and hire A-players?

Here's what's been successful for us at Brown Family Law, and what's been successful for those I've spoken with about this subject over the last couple years:

### 1. Pay more.

Yes, paying people more does, in fact, attract better talent. This goes for everyone in a law firm, from attorneys to paralegals to receptionists. Remember that one A-player will often be more productive than two B-players or 3-4 C-players. In light of that reality, pay as much as you reasonably can for talent.

### 2. Have a clear vision for your firm and communicate that vision all the time.

A-players want to work with A-player employers, and A-player employers have specific visions for their law firms. The more concrete and compelling the vision, and the more effectively that vision can be communicated to potential A-player hires, the more attracted they will be to a firm.

### 3. Provide A-players freedom and opportunities.

I have seen many law firm owners stifle their A-players because they fear that giving A-players too much freedom will cause them to leave and take clients with them. Maybe, but I can 100% guarantee that stifling an A-player will absolutely cause that person to leave. Better to give A-players more freedom and opportunity and chance it, than restrict their freedom and guarantee the worst possible outcome.



### 4. Identify A-players early, create genuine, long-lasting relationships with them, and hire when the opportunity presents itself.

Hiring A-players is like scouting in professional sports. You must know the sport and the players, and you have to always be on the look-out for talent. Sometimes, you can find A-level talent and hire that person immediately. More often, however, you identify an A-player and create a relationship in hopes of hiring at some point in the future when the time is right. This takes time and commitment and a willingness to maintain relationships in the long term, but there will be no greater return to your firm than hiring the right, high-level people.

### 5. Become an A-level employer and create an A-level firm.

Like I said before, A-level talent wants to work with A-level employers that run A-level firms. If you are, at best, a B-level employer who runs a C-level firm (e.g., low-revenue, no vision, loaded with C-level talent), then good luck to you. Work on yourself. Become an A-level employer by increasingly your skills, your systems, your collection rate, how you treat your team and your colleagues, etc. Become the employer you would want to work for if you were the best attorney in your practice area. Then, you have a chance to hire A-players.

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