

Meet Philip Hood

Philip Hood followed his passion for workers' rights to law school.



They are vulnerable. They don't know the process, and they need someone they can trust who will treat them fairly. That's my ultimate goal—whatever that takes.

Philip Hood is just finishing his first semester as a law student in the part-time division at the UA Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law.

He's a busy guy. In addition to his law school studies, Philip has a family—his daughter is in junior high school, his son is a freshman at his alma mater, Grambling State University, and his wife is a credentialer for Arkansas Blue Cross Blue Shield. "Her other job is putting up with me," he says.

Philip also helps care for his parents who are both retired postal workers. His father is undergoing treatment for cancer, and his mother is battling dementia. He has taken over their affairs.

A Little Rock native, Philip has four siblings—one brother and three sisters. "Thus my inclination to argue," he says.

After high school, Philip went to college at Grambling. He was a first generation college student and the first of his siblings to get a degree. He went to Grambling to play football under Eddie Robinson, their legendary football coach.

After freshman year, Philip realized he wasn't trying to get to the NFL like everyone else on the team. Instead, he focused on his studies in Marketing. His goal was to have an insurance agency, and he wanted to learn how to market his business.

He returned to Little Rock with a degree and a future wife. "We met at Grambling, and she followed me home," he jokes.

Philip started his career as a Financial Advisor with American Express after obtaining his Series 7 securities license. From there, he transitioned into an insurance agency owner with Allstate, ultimately becoming an independent agent. His agency was located in Little Rock, at the intersection of Rodney Parham and Markham, across from Red Lobster.

During that time, he also worked at Southwest Airlines—mainly for the free flights. He became a shop steward for the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAMAW), Razorback Local 2907. At age 29 he was elected as the youngest President of the Local, which represented more than 1000 members at three different airlines. This position led him into politics. When Gov. Beebe was elected, Philip was appointed Commissioner of the Arkansas Workers' Compensation Commission to represent the interests of the injured worker.

Philip is now Clerk of the Workers Compensation Commission. The Commission



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is both the regulatory body for workers' compensation for the State as well as the appellate court for Administrative Law Judge decisions. As Clerk, Philip manages the appellate process, including routing pleadings, handling the ALJ docket, and researching claims.

Philip credits his interest in law school to his work with the union and Workers Compensation Commission.

"When I was shop steward, I dealt with employment issues and advocated on the employees' behalf. Then, working as a Commissioner intrigued me," Philip said. "The chairperson of the Commission has to be a lawyer, and discussions of cases quickly acclimated me to legal jargon and terminology. There was also the difference between a 'legal fact' and what I considered to be a 'fact' in a case."

His family, although supportive of his new path, is a little confused.

"They wonder if I've lost my mind. I'm 13 years from being able to retire, but

instead of winding down, I'm ramping it up again," he says. "My wife helped me study for my security license, so she knows this is going to be a test for everyone. My daughter has a lot of fun reminding me to go do my homework."

Philip enjoys the law school learning environment and the rigor of study, but he's not a fan of the sleep deprivation that goes along with a day job, night classes, and a busy family.

"I have second thoughts every now and then, especially when everything is due at the same time, but I press through it. Finals will be the test of whether I've retained anything this semester."

He does have his favorite classes so far.

"Contracts with prof. cummings is my favorite, but Torts with Professor Oliver is the most interesting."

Why the difference?

"The professors are polar opposites, but they are both enjoyable. Professor Oliver's teaching style keeps Torts interesting. His

hypos are always engaging. In Contracts, Professor cummings wants you to do well, he's pushing for you to do great things. You want to fulfill those expectations, and you want to be prepared when he calls on you."

Looking four years down the road to his law school graduation, Philip knows he wants to work as an employment and workers compensation lawyer, and he's open to options that would make that possible. He traces his passion to his work with the union and helping, or simply listening to, fellow employees.

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