

Nelson's work ethic helped her clear career hurdles

BY ASHLEY PIER | SPECIAL

When Carol Sue Nelson started practicing law in Birmingham 30 years ago, she could count the number of women lawyers in the city on two hands.

Now, as a shareholder at Maynard, Cooper and Gale PC, she has worked her way up the corporate ladder as a respected and dedicated lawyer.

"When I was going through law school, there was an extra hurdle to prove your-

self as a young woman in the business world," Nelson said.

"Now it's extremely competitive and you have to be out there every day doing your best to be innovative while coming up with the best way to deal with an issue."

Many of Nelson's clients are major companies, such as banks and hospitals, that she advises on a daily basis.

She has been working with many of the same clients for more than 20 years as a counselor to help them deal with the legal aspects of workplace issues.

"Carol Sue is in demand because of her mature judgment on labor and employment issues, and she is a terrific counselor," said Lee Cooper, another shareholder at Maynard,

Cooper and Gale. "She has a style and a presence that makes everyone feel comfortable around her."

Nelson was appointed by Gov. Bob Riley to serve on the Alabama Women's Commission and has served as a chair for the last four years.

She also was recently inducted into the Litigation Counsel of America and has received several legal honors, including recognition in The Best Lawyers in America.

"She's a great lawyer and a greater person. She brings something to the team spirit that we'd like to duplicate in everybody," Cooper said.

"If I had 100 more lawyers like Carol Sue, my job would be very easy."

In her free time, Nelson enjoys spending her time with her Tennessee walking horses and playing a round or two of golf.

Nelson describes being a mentor to young lawyers as one of the most enjoyable and rewarding aspects of her job.

She believes that success can be achieved by learning how to balance professional life with family and friends and by giving back to the community.

She follows and promotes a simple work ethic.

"Nothing beats hard work and dedication in whatever job you do," Nelson said.

"As a lawyer, you need to make sure you know the business and culture of your clients and what their goals are before achieving the desired results."



CAROL SUE NELSON

Age: 55

Title: Shareholder

Company: Maynard Cooper & Gale PC

Family: Husband, Chris Mitchell; two sons, Trey Nelson and Bentley Nelson

Education: Auburn University, undergraduate degree, 1974; Cumberland School of Law, J.D., 1977

Ultimate career goal: To help bring about a new Constitution for Alabama

Who has been your biggest mentor? Judge James Hancock (the federal judge she clerked for after law school)

How do you define success? Success is the satisfaction of reaching your long-term goals through hard work and dedication and feeling good about it in your heart.

Word that best describes you: Steel magnolia