

Mintz Levin Partner Plays More Than One Tune

By Meghan Tribe

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Brad Scheller usually gets to work around 7 a.m. In his New York office, the Mintz Levin partner keeps a spare, stand up string bass. It's not performance-ready, but Scheller's wife asked him to get it out of the house.

"I get in pretty early and I'll stand there and I'll just play a little bit before my day starts and before anyone else gets here," he said.

Scheller's been playing music long before he began practicing law. In between keeping up with his patent litigation practice, he plays bass and does vocals for The Slicked Up 9's, a swing band that Scheller started while in college.

For nearly 20 years, Scheller and the band have toured up and down the east coast, playing over 500 gigs and opening for bands like The Cherry Poppin' Daddies and Brian Setzer Orchestra. And when Scheller's not playing with the The Slicked Up 9's, he's rocking out with The Incumbents, a band based out of his hometown of Tarrytown, New York.

"I just fit it in [and] it just works," Scheller said of his music career. "I feel like the busier I am, the more things I can do and the more productive I am. I like it that way."

Scheller began playing the stand up or upright bass in grammar school. He went on to attend Lehigh University in Pennsylvania, where Scheller and his friends formed The Slicked Up 9's in 1998 amid a rebirth in swing music, which became popular during the Great Depression and whose stylistic origins are a blend of jazz and popular music.

While initially studying to become an engineer, Scheller wound up taking legal courses that caused him to change course and become a patent attorney. He joined IP boutique Morgan & Finnegan out of the Villanova University School of Law in 2003 and joined Mintz Levin in 2008, shortly before Morgan & Finnegan's dissolution. Scheller now specializes in advising electric and mechanical engineering clients on patent prosecution and litigation matters.

"I just kind of kept music on the side as a passion," Scheller said of his decision to keep jamming on the side. He added that doing so has taken discipline and some intense scheduling, something not possible without an incredibly patient wife.



Brad Scheller and the Slicked Up 9's

Despite the apparent dichotomy between being a buttoned-down IP lawyer by day and musician by night, Scheller said there are some similarities between his legal and music careers, which at times can seem to be in harmony.

"It's one of those things you don't really think about, but [the] commonalities between performing in courtroom and performing on stage for people and speaking to an audience, it really actually fits together quite well and makes a lot of sense," Scheller said. "Performing onstage is very similar to performing in a courtroom to a jury or to a judge—it all kind of goes hand in hand."

Scheller and The Slicked Up 9's have an upcoming gig in Tarrytown on July 27 as part of the Pierson Park Summer Concerts. But there is one event that Scheller is still hoping to land.

"[We] haven't played firm-wide yet," Scheller said. "That's one thing I'd like to do—have The Slick Up 9's play one of our holiday parties."

Meghan Tribe is a reporter covering the changing face of Big Law, from lateral moves and work-from-home programs to diversity initiatives. Contact her at mtribe@alm.com. On Twitter: @TribeMeghan