

It has been said that Brian Headley takes Bar exams for fun, but that's not really true.

The 2004 WVU Law graduate is, however, licensed in Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Virginia, Kentucky and South Carolina.

"You could start on the border of Canada and drive all the way to the beach and, with the exception of the hour you're going to spend in North Carolina, you would be in our territory," Headley said about his firm, Headley Ballard LLC, which specializes in medical malpractice and personal injury.

Their territory has not been carved out by Headley alone — Jason Ballard, a WVU Law classmate and the other half of Headley Ballard LLC — is also licensed to practice law in several of those states. But before either one of them took a Bar exam and gained a sizeable presence outside of West Virginia, they were a part of a close-knit class at WVU Law.



Brian Headley

College of Law



Class of 2004



Jason Ballard

"We have a pretty tight group of friends that we graduated law school with, and we're always in touch with them. We have a very active group text thread," Headley said. "They're my best friends."

[Jessica Haught](#), now a WVU Law teaching professor and director of the [Fitzsimmons Center for Litigation and Advocacy](#), is one of those friends from the Class of 2004.

"Brian and Jason were great classmates — loyal, smart and fun," she recalls. "They were always watching out for each other and for their friends, on and off Law School Hill."

After Headley and Ballard graduated law school, they went their separate ways and began successful legal careers. Ballard joined the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Corps and Headley worked for six years at defense firms in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It eventually got too cold in Pittsburgh for Headley, who was gaining some success as a plaintiff's attorney, so he decided to move south.



During a trip to Parkersburg, West Virginia, to visit his WVU Law classmate Jay Gerber, Headley jumped on an opportunity to take on some medical malpractice cases. This began a steady flow of referral cases that eventually allowed Headley to partner with Ballard to create their firm.

“I thought, ‘well, OK. I’ll just take on these cases myself and I had a laptop and an old flip phone,” Headley recalled. “And that’s how the firm started, in my bedroom. But by 2016, I had too much legal work coming in from West Virginia.”

Luckily, Ballard was exiting the JAG Corps right when Headley needed him most. Ballard was living in Virginia, it made sense for them to join forces. So, they said “Let’s do it.” And that was that.

Now, Headley Ballard LLC operates offices in Daniel Island, South Carolina, and in Pearisburg, Virginia. Headley works out of the South Carolina office and

Ballard is in Virginia. The firm handles cases in West Virginia, Virginia, South Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Kentucky.

The pair explained that they would not be able to do so without the support of their understanding families; the help of their capable associate, Jon Matthews; or the steady hands of their dedicated support staff members, Kelly Creech, DeAnna Perkins, Misty Testerman and Emma Woodham.

With that team, Headley Ballard LLC is often doing business in West Virginia, and both Headley and Ballard admit they love working on cases in the Mountain State. Through this work, they get to see many of their classmates and work with people they know from way back when. They also attend as many WVU and WVU Law events as

possible, from professional networking receptions to alumni gatherings. They are also both members of the West Virginia Trial Lawyers Association.

“We have a really great relationship with counsel in West Virginia because 98% of them are WVU College of Law grads, it seems. Before or after every proceeding, we always talk about Mountaineer football or Mountaineer basketball,” Ballard said. “I think we hold WVU Law so near and dear to our hearts because of the relationships that were built there and that continue.”



To give back to the College of Law and its current students, Ballard makes regular trips to speak to members of [Veteran’s Advocacy Law Clinic](#). Each year, he shares insight from his 12 years in the Army JAG Corps with the Clinic’s student attorneys who work to help veterans with their legal needs.

After speaking to the veteran’s clinic last year, a familiar-looking classmate approached Ballard. It was Jessica Haught. She wanted Headley Ballard LLC to become Dean’s Partners.

According to Ballard, it was a no-brainer for the firm to oblige.

Dean’s Partners invest in the growth and development of legal education at the WVU College of Law. They contribute a minimum of \$5,000 total in

one fiscal year or \$10,000 total over a period of five fiscal years.

“I think you’ll find with us that we want to be able to give back to the law school to the maximum extent that we can,” Headley said. “For me, when Jessica brought up the idea of being a Dean’s Partner to Jason, it was sort of like an ah-ha moment. West Virginia and particularly the College of Law have played a big part in the success that we’ve been fortunate enough to have.”

Ballard concurs. “Our firm is on this level where we can contribute financially to the law school, so of course we wanted to contribute,” he said.

In summer 2021, Headley and Ballard contributed to WVU Law students' education in another way by hiring two interns. They agreed that while it was an education opportunity for the student, it would also be an opportunity for the firm to foster a mutually beneficial relationship with the Meredith Center for Career Services and Professional Development.

As Headley sees it, an attorney from the WVU College of Law would likely want to spend time in West Virginia after graduation. They would also know many other members of the legal community in the firm's territories.

Consequently, second-year law students Regan Martinez and Alexis Kessel spent their summer working in the firm's Virginia office, giving Headley, Ballard and their staff much-needed support. For their part, the interns were with the firm through it all, experiencing mediations, hearings and depositions.



Regan Martinez

College of Law



Class of 2023



Alexis Kessel

“Every single thing that I did, they got to sit in and watch and I asked them to help me get prepared and reviewed records and do outlines for us,” Headley explained. “Then during breaks we would go out and say, ‘OK well, what do you think? What else should we ask? How are we doing? Do you believe them? Do you not believe that? Why not so?’ I mean, they were substantively, legitimately involved in everything that we did all summer, and they did a really nice job.”

Throughout the summer in the firm's admittedly laid-back office setting, the interns grew as attorneys and learned new ways to think and how spot issues. Then, with Headley and Ballard's guidance, they put knowledge into practice.

“Taking on interns, it felt like we were doing what we ought to be doing. We enjoy what we do, and there's a duty that comes along with that to share our passion for law with younger attorneys,” Headley said. “Just yesterday, Regan texted everybody in the office and said that one of her professors said she was the first student in 15 years to get a 100% on this one assignment! Now, I'm not saying that's because she worked with us, but it's probably because she worked with us.”