



# The Mottley Law Firm

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## Ditch the Tourist Traps

### 3 National Parks That Are Worth the Detour

Whenever you hear a friend or family member say they're going to take a road trip to visit some of America's most beautiful national parks, they usually plan to visit the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, the Great Smoky Mountains, or Yosemite. These national parks consistently attract millions of visitors every year, but they're far from the only must-see national parks in the country. There are 429 protected national sites within the U.S., and 63 of those have obtained the official "national park" designation in their names. (The other labels are battlefields, historic sites, monuments, recreation areas, etc.)

If you want to experience the beauty of America without the crowds, consider visiting these destinations during your next vacation!

#### Channel Islands National Park, California

Often referred to as the Galapagos of North America, the Channel Islands are a unique area of the coast of Southern California. While visiting, you can expect to see seals, island foxes, and over 2,000 other plant and animal species, with 145 found nowhere else on Earth. You can reach the mainland visitor center in Ventura by car, but the islands are only accessible by park concessionaire boats or private boats. Make reservations in advance.

#### Cuyahoga National Park, Ohio

If you want a unique experience, visit Cuyahoga National Park. Like many other national parks, you can enjoy hiking, rock climbing, and photography while exploring the park's 33,000 acres. You can admire many of the 1,000 species of plants and animals throughout



your exploration, but if you want to get the full experience, hop aboard the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad.

#### Wind Cave National Park, South Dakota

Exploring a cave might not be your first thought when considering national parks, but Wind Cave is a one-of-a-kind experience. It's one of the longest and most complex caves in the world and has many unique features, such as frostwork, cave popcorn, and boxwork, creating unique sights with every step. Once you head back outside, a beautiful mixed-grass prairie, home to bison, prairie dogs, and more, will greet you.



# THE MOTTLEY CREW REVIEW

07/25

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## FROM MOPS TO MOTIONS

### Lessons From My Summer Jobs

Scrubbing toilets taught me as much about being a lawyer as attending law school did.

With summer in full swing, I've been reflecting on the jobs I had growing up and how they helped me become the person I am today. As my intro to this article suggests, my earliest experiences in the workforce weren't always glamorous, but they taught me plenty of invaluable lessons I still follow.

My first official summer job was as a janitor at an elementary school when I was 15 — a job I landed thanks to my father working in the school system in our hometown. I did all the things that janitors do: mop floors, buff floors, replace light bulbs, and, yes, scrub and fix toilets. In addition to honing my bathroom cleaning skills, I learned the value of getting paid for my services and the importance of having the discipline to follow a regular work schedule.

My second summer job was at an independent ice cream parlor started by a wonderful guy named Bob, who had been a general manager of a Friendly's. It was a family-run business with a great atmosphere, and working there helped me understand and appreciate all that went into being an entrepreneur and running your own business to support your family. Additionally, I learned the all-important skill of scooping ice cream the right way. More importantly, I learned the value of setting boundaries with customers when necessary.

One day, a customer was being very disrespectful to the parlor's staff. Bob's daughter, who managed the place, stood up for her team members and quickly put that belligerent person in their place. Although it's a good rule of thumb to believe the customer is always right, that doesn't mean a customer or client has the right to be rude. Witnessing that interaction at the shop left an impression that inspires how I work with people today at my firm. The quickest and best way to have me decline your case is to be rude or demanding to the person at the front desk who answers our phone.

Next, I landed a summer job at a factory owned by a British chemical company that developed film in the area. It was a unionized plant that paid very well, but the rotating shifts were demanding. It was common for me to work from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. and then switch to 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. or 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. That kind of schedule taught me what it was like to be responsible, no matter what, and to hold down a "real" job for a large corporation.



The final summer job I was doing was landscaping for my uncle-in-law. I worked several summers outside in the heat, which taught me a lot about what it meant to work hard physically. Although I ultimately pursued a career that keeps me busy in offices, I still enjoy being in nature and look for any excuse to spend time outdoors.

Even though no two summer jobs I had were alike, each one profoundly affected how I conduct myself and my business now. The lessons I learned from those experiences meant as much to me as any higher education course I ever took. Young people today should experience as many summer jobs as possible to enrich themselves in ways that will benefit them in years to come. Sure, not all jobs available to teenagers are pleasant, but experiences that make you a more well-rounded person rarely are.

Take it from a lawyer: Cleaning a dirty bathroom is as meaningful as laying out a strong argument in court. Both require dedication and hard work, and both exemplify what it means to put in an honest effort. When you have some free time, think back to your earliest jobs and compare them to your current work. You may be surprised by how much your initial steps led you to where you are today.

—Kevin Mottley



# Cost-Conscious Connections

## Fun and Frugal Ideas for Grandkids

Summer vacation is the golden opportunity to make precious memories with your grandkids without breaking the bank! While life's hustle and bustle can sometimes throw a wrench in your plans, creativity can go a long way. Here are six ways to have a blast with the kiddos on a budget.

### Explore Nature Together

Nothing beats getting outside! Many local nature preserves offer free or low-cost access, and they're great places to hike, learn about local plants and wildlife, or even participate in volunteer activities. The fresh air, the sounds of birds, and the chance to explore are perfect for curious young minds (and those young at heart!).

### Share Your Hobbies

Do you have a knack for knitting or a passion for golf? Chances are that your grandkids would love to learn! Sharing your hobbies can be a fun, practically free way to spend time together. Whether it's a morning fishing trip to a nearby lake or an afternoon crafting, these moments can become cherished memories.

### Discover Local Gems

Smaller, lesser-known museums or factory tours can be fascinating and won't hurt your wallet. They're often just the right scale for shorter attention spans and are usually less crowded. Plus, they sometimes offer discounts or free days — don't forget to ask!



### Utilize Community Resources

Your local library or community center likely hosts a variety of free or inexpensive activities. From story hours to craft days, these events are for family fun and learning. Also, be sure to check out any local festivals.

### Build and Create

Look out for free classes at local hardware stores like Home Depot or Lowe's, where kids can engage in projects like building a birdhouse. These workshops promise a good time and give the kids something to take home and be proud of.

### Hometown Tourism

Lastly, don't underestimate the joy of simple activities. A picnic in the park, flying a kite, or a day playing board games can be just as exciting and meaningful as any expensive outing.



# Ears, Empathy, and Understanding Listening Lights the Way

If I've learned one thing as a lawyer, husband, and father, it's that all people want to be heard and understood.

July 18 is World Listening Day, a time to recognize and celebrate the value of effective communication. It may not be a major holiday, but it's a meaningful one. After all, if people simply did a better job of hearing what others say, many of the world's problems would likely be resolved.

The ability to listen is a muscle I've had to exercise and develop as a lawyer. In my profession, I often work with clients who are dealing with some of the worst situations imaginable, ranging from the loss of a loved one to sustaining a horrific injury that has changed their lives. Naturally, these folks also deal with the emotions and mental health issues that go along with these intense circumstances. It requires deep intuition to determine who an individual is in their heart and how they feel in a particular scenario.

Admittedly, I wasn't always a great listener. Early in my career, I worked on my first brain injury case with a senior lawyer and grew frustrated by our client's inability to control their emotions. When I expressed my frustration to the other attorney, he replied, "Well, they *do* have a brain injury, you know." That moment was an important lesson in understanding a client's situation and listening for ways to help them.

Allowing my clients to let off steam with me is one of the best things I can provide them as an attorney. Even if they can't fully articulate their perspectives or concerns, the light bulb will go off in my head, and I'll think, "Oh, *that's* what's going on here!" That level of understanding helps me build my case.

It's also essential to listen with your eyes. I have a rule that I visit all my clients' homes, whether they live in Virginia or Maine. By looking at their family photos and seeing how they live, I can gain a greater perspective on what they need from me beyond what their words may reveal.

This World Listening Day, make it a point to listen to those around you more intently. You may learn more about them — and perhaps yourself — than you imagined.

—Kevin Mottley

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# SUDOKU

# 4TH OF JULY COCKTAIL

Inspired by PeelWithZeal.com

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 oz grenadine, divided
- 3 oz vodka
- 6 oz lemonade
- 2 oz blue curaçao

## DIRECTIONS

1. In each of 2 cocktail glasses, pour 1 oz grenadine and fill with ice.
2. In a cocktail shaker or glass measuring cup, mix lemonade and vodka.
3. Slowly pour the mixture evenly into the glasses with grenadine.
4. Place a soup spoon upside down over each glass. Very slowly, pour half of the blue curaçao over the spoon, cascading the curaçao to create the blue layer.
5. Serve immediately, and let freedom ring

# 'RECALCULATING ...' THOUGHTS ON CHARTING LIFE'S COORDINATES

You're never too busy to better yourself.

As we approach the year's halfway point, I've been thinking a lot about where I've been and where I hope to go. I recently settled a big case that had taken up much of my time, and I'll have a case going to trial by the time this month's newsletter reaches you. Whenever I get to the finish line with a big case or something else that has required 100% of my focus, I look for ways to reset my GPS for the future.

If all goes as planned, I'll have most of the second half of the year to recalculate my life and business. Whenever you're presented with downtime after completing a significant project or achieving an important milestone, it's good to check in on yourself and, if necessary, reset your goals. Life isn't about to slow down for most of us anytime soon, so it's essential to embrace those moments of calm when you can and use that time to consider ways to improve your life.

What am I trying to accomplish at my firm? How can I improve things? Do I need to take a new direction? These and other questions will likely be top of mind for the rest of the year as I reorient myself with what I'm doing all this for. Creating more video content for the firm and developing new methods of marketing the practice are among my top priorities before December rolls around.

If you're looking for ways to stay motivated as you work toward your goals, here are some things that may help you. As mentioned earlier this year in this newsletter, I create a laminated, double-sided "goal card" that I carry in my wallet annually. It has been a good way to check on myself and focus on my ambitions. And, of course, there's nothing wrong with seeking advice from mentors and people who have already succeeded in areas where you wish to thrive.

Whatever goals you set for yourself over the next few months, I wish you the best of luck. Remember to keep your life's GPS switched on and ready as you move down the road.

Where is it taking you next?

—Kevin Mottley

