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The Mottley Law Firm

FOLLOW THE HERD

LET WILDLIFE MIGRATIONS PLAN YOUR NEXT TRIP

Are you planning your next vacation but don't know where to start? Why not try following the herd? Every year, animals all over the world hit the road, sky, or sea for impressive migrations, and you can get a front row seat to nature's big show. From massive groups of wildebeests crossing the Serengeti to flocks of flamingos turning the Tanzania sky pink, these seasonal journeys are one-of-a-kind experiences for your bucket list.

Nature's Grand Processions

If you want to go big, the Great Migration across the Serengeti is one of the largest annual animal voyages on the planet. Thundering groups of wildebeests, zebras, and gazelles can be spotted from July to August as they search for water and food. Travel to Sri Lanka's Minneriya and Kaudulla National Parks if you want to snap a photo of a pachyderm. Between July and October, hundreds of Asian elephants meet up there for an ancient tradition called "The Gathering."



Great Journeys Overhead

An adventure that's for the birds, the flamingo flight in Tanzania is a colorful sky show unlike anything else. The flocks take to the air from June to September and January to March, following mighty rains. Go nocturnal in November as millions of fruit bats hang from trees and flutter in the dark searching for snacks. These night flyers put on an eerie display at dusk in Zambia every year and may change your mind about the critters.

Voyages at Sea

Set a course for the high seas to witness the longest migration of any mammals as thousands of giant humpback whales swim across the planet. They cruise from the coasts of South Africa and South America to the warm waters of the Pacific and make stops in the icy seas of Antarctica. Though they come in much smaller packages, the trek of sea turtles to their nesting beaches has been an epic sight for over 100 million years. You can see them swim from the Indian Ocean to the shores of Sodwana Bay in South Africa before they lay their eggs.

PRO BONO POWER

Courage and Commitment in Free Legal Work

Have you ever been awakened in the middle of the night by a menacing call from a neo-Nazi?

I hope your answer is "no," but that's exactly what happened to me during one of the most challenging cases of my career.

Before I go there, a bit of context is in order. Whether accurate or not, the general public tends to think lawyers are only in it for the money. Well, *this* lawyer has more than a few thoughts about that assumption. As a business owner, I'd be remiss if I didn't acknowledge that, yes, money is necessary to keep our firm in operation, put food on my table, and ensure my team members remain employed. That said, some of the most rewarding moments I've had in this profession didn't earn me a penny.

With April being National Volunteer Month, I'd like to tell you about *pro bono*. It's a Latin term meaning "for the public good," and it's helped shape some of the most significant milestones in my career. In the legal world, "pro bono publico" refers to the work lawyers provide voluntarily for free. Virginia law guidelines suggest that lawyers contribute 2% of their professional time, or roughly 50 hours, to pro bono work annually. This commitment typically involves donating time to cases in poverty law, civil rights law, and public-interest law, as well as volunteer activities designed to increase the availability of pro bono legal services.

While every pro bono experience I've ever had has been memorable in its own way, one case in particular will never leave my mind ... especially since it put everything from my career to my family's safety at risk. In 2008, I represented a group of tenants from an apartment complex in Virginia Beach who sued their landlord for racial discrimination. The accusers claimed that their landlord used racial slurs and restricted their children to a curfew, among other offensive acts.

The case took a crazy turn when a white supremacist group got wind of my involvement and started publishing information about my wife and me on their neo-Nazi blog and website, which, of course, led to the calls we received in the middle of the night. The FBI got involved, and we even had police guarding our home for a while.

As the chaos unfolded, my wife asked, "How much are you getting paid for this case?"

"Nothing," I replied.



Ultimately, the tenants I represented were successful in their legal action, and the perpetrator behind the harassment against my family and me was brought to justice. While the entire situation was quite stressful and one I'd rather not repeat, I'm still glad I worked the case for free and helped people subjected to such undue treatment achieve a victory.

Every case I take provides me with a new lesson in being a better lawyer. Every hour of my work each year serves as my reminder that *everyone* is entitled to justice and representation regardless of their financial status or position in life. Most importantly, it's shown me the value of volunteering my time to help others.

No matter how you do it this month (or any time this year), I encourage you to give of yourself to support others without thinking of financial reward. Our community is full of fantastic organizations and efforts that can always use an extra pair of hands. I promise you that what you'll receive from the experience is worth more than money in your pocket.

-Kevin Mottley

WHEN THE NEST EMPTIES, LIFE OPENS

The Joy of Rediscovering Yourself After the Kids Leave

When kids leave the nest, the house feels different. Things are quieter, calmer, and suddenly full of possibility. The hours that once revolved around school schedules, sports practices, and family dinners are now wide open. This is your chance to reconnect with hobbies you may have loved once, or explore brand-new ones, without interruptions or guilt.

Creative passions resurface.

Creative hobbies can flourish when the house is your own again. Painting, writing, photography, or even learning to play an instrument become more enjoyable when you don't have to squeeze them into stolen moments. You can leave your supplies out, lose track of time, and enjoy the process without worrying about being needed every five minutes.

Movement becomes on your own terms.

Fitness looks different without kids at home, and that's a good thing. Maybe you finally have time for long morning walks, yoga classes, pickleball, or cycling without coordinating drop-offs. You can exercise when it feels right, not when it fits between obligations. Movement becomes something you look forward to, not something you rush through.

Travel is possible without compromise.

One of the greatest joys of an empty nest is the freedom to travel spontaneously. Weekend getaways, off-season trips, and longer adventures become easier when you're only planning for yourself (or with a partner). Whether it's exploring a new city, taking a scenic road trip, or revisiting a favorite destination, travel without kids feels more relaxed and deeply rewarding.

Learning shifts to 'just because.'

With fewer responsibilities at home, learning becomes a pleasure instead of another task. Cooking classes, language lessons, book clubs, or history courses offer mental stimulation and social connection. It's energizing to learn simply because you're curious, with no expectations attached.

Giving back finds purpose.

Many empty nesters find fulfillment in volunteering. Helping at an animal shelter, mentoring, or supporting local causes offers structure and meaning while still leaving room for personal freedom. Giving back becomes a choice, not an obligation.

Talk Trumps Tech

The Power of Picking Up the Phone

How rude, snarky, and judgmental were you in the last text you sent to a dear friend or family member?

If your immediate answer is, "I'd never be that way with someone," you're not alone ... but you may be surprised by how those quick words you type on your phone may be misconstrued. No matter how many emojis exist in the world, there's really no better way to fully express your tone and intention with someone than picking up the phone and speaking with them.

I started thinking a lot about this when I learned that April marks the 166th anniversary of the Pony Express. The ways we communicate with one another have evolved dramatically since the days when letters arrived by horseback, but these changes haven't necessarily been for the better. (For example, I recently deleted the **X.com** app (formerly Twitter) from my phone. The back-and-forth banter I'd see on it every day just became too toxic for me.) That's why The Mottley Law Firm will always favor phone calls

over tapping keys on a phone or computer when conversing with our clients.

Does this firm communicate with people electronically when necessary? Sure, but I'm still someone who replies to a team member who says they haven't heard from someone: "Have you tried calling them?" I don't know how many times I've been in a meeting about a case, had a question, and reached over, grabbed the phone, and dialed someone (opposing counsel, a client, or an expert) on the spot, without hesitating.

That said, nothing beats face-to-face conversation, especially when you're a lawyer. Recently, I went to lunch with an attorney at a defense firm. This wasn't just any defense firm; it was one I've had cases against in the past. As you might imagine, my interactions with this attorney haven't always been friendly, but I invited him out anyway. We had a delightful conversation and are on very good terms. When I got back to my office, I grabbed a piece of my personal stationery, wrote him a note by hand, and sent it.



Would our most recent interaction have concluded the way it did if we had communicated over text? Not likely. Did the experience make me appreciate meeting up with him in person? Absolutely!

Technology is constantly changing, but my belief in the human side of communication never will. Never hesitate to contact The Mottley Law Firm through any means you are comfortable with, but always know we're happy to take a call.

—Kevin Mottley

From the Funny Files

Lawyer Jokes for a Quick Laugh

Are you ready to have a laugh at a lawyer's expense?

With April being National Humor Month, I figured it was a good time to remind everyone that laughter is often the best gift we can give to ourselves and others. Of course, that means joking about ourselves, too. Life can be tough, but we shouldn't take it too seriously all the time.

Here are a few family-friendly lawyer jokes that made me chuckle when I came across them online. Some are snappy, others are Dad joke groan-worthy, and all are hopefully going to put a smile on your face!

What's the difference between an accountant and a lawyer?

Accountants know they're boring.

What do lawyers wear to court? Lawsuits!

What kind of underwear do lawyers wear? Briefs!

What do you get when you cross the Godfather with a lawyer?

An offer you can't understand.

Why are lawyers always so charming? Because they have their own appeal.

When attorneys get married, they don't say, "I do"; they say, "I accept the terms and conditions."

Why did the judge grant the penguin bail? He wasn't a flight risk.

What do you call a priest who becomes a lawyer? A father-in-law.

What do you call a lawyer who wins a case against a mime?

A motionless victory.

Why did the lawyer make coffee? There were sufficient grounds.

Why did the scarecrow become a lawyer? Because he was outstanding in his field!

The problem with lawyer jokes is that lawyers don't think they're funny, and other people don't think they're jokes!

—Kevin Mottley

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3	6	2	9	5	8	3	2	7



CRAB RANGOON MAC AND CHEESE

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 lb elbow pasta
- 8 oz Jack cheese, grated
- 8 oz cream cheese
- 1 bunch scallions, chopped
- 1/2 cup pickled jalapeños, chopped (optional)
- 2 tbsp soy sauce
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1/2 tbsp red pepper flakes
- 1/2 lb lump crab
- 12 wonton wrappers

DIRECTIONS

1. Bring water to a boil for the pasta and preheat the oven to 350 F.
2. Drop pasta into boiling water.
3. In a bowl, mix all the ingredients except pasta and wonton wrappers; stir well.
4. Just before the pasta is ready, add about 1/2 cup of pasta water to the cheese mixture; stir well.
5. Strain pasta and add to cheese mixture. Stir, then place it in a baking dish or individual ramekins.
6. Bake for 25–30 minutes until bubbly and creamy.
7. While baking, cut wontons into triangles and fry batches in oil until crispy.
8. Drain wontons and season with salt.
9. Serve pasta with the crispy wonton wrappers.

Inspired by TheFoodInMyBeard.com