

Dixon takes on new role



Photo by Bennett Loudon

Type-A attorney has found balance at Bond, Schoeneck & King

By BENNETT LOUDON

Cressida Dixon, chair of the trust and estates department at Bond, Schoeneck & King, is now deputy managing member of the Rochester office.

"I'm very excited about taking on new opportunities on the management side. This is a great opportunity for me to give back to the firm that's already given so much to me, as well as help grow the office," Dixon said.

Bond, Schoeneck & King has 250 lawyers in nine offices in New York state, plus Naples, Fla., and Overland Park, Kansas.

"Cressida is a well-respected member of this office and a great role model for our younger attorneys. She is someone with whom I look forward to working with as we continue to expand our office and serve our clients," said Edward P. Hourihan Jr., Bond's managing member.

Dixon and Hourihan will work together making decisions on hiring, budgets, growth strategy, and staff issues.

The new role is just another challenge to Dixon, 47, who prides herself on do-

Cressida Dixon

Title: Deputy managing member, Bond Schoeneck King attorneys

Education: University at Albany; Syracuse University College of Law

Age: 47

Home: Penfield

Family: Husband, Michael; sons Bryce, 10, Garrett, 14.

Hobbies: Exercise, running

Quote: "People will tell you, for a long time, there was no gray in my life. It was all or nothing."

ing everything efficiently.

By the time she arrives at her office about 8:30 a.m. most days, she's already been up for at least 3 ½ hours, completed a grueling workout, sifted through emails and phone messages and gotten her 10- and 14-year-old boys off to school.

Dixon's career started at Woods Oviatt Gilman LLP where she spent a year before moving to Nixon Peabody LLP. She's been at Bond since 2010.

Moving to Bond was a lifestyle choice for Dixon, not long after recovering from a stroke that happened in October 2008 and a subsequent, related medical issue.

Dixon was working out, of course, do-

ing pushups at home about 5 a.m. when the stroke happened. Her sons were 1 and 5 and her husband, Michael, was also exercising at the YMCA.

Initially, Dixon was paralyzed on her left side and she couldn't speak, but she managed to crawl to her Blackberry and press a button to redial the last number called — Dixon's sister, Kim.

Dixon couldn't speak clearly, but her sister understood that she was trying to say she had a stroke.

Dixon had no family history of strokes. Doctors said it was related to a hole in her heart that she never knew about, combined with high cholesterol.

Her recovery was complicated because a doctor accidentally cut her femoral artery during surgery to fix the heart problem, and she also developed an infection.

The life-threatening episode led Dixon to reconsider her high-stress work-first career path at Nixon Peabody and decide to make a change to a practice that allowed her to better control her schedule and balance work and family life.

"I'm definitely Type-A," Dixon said. "I didn't know how to relax."

"People will tell you, for a long time, there was no gray in my life. It was all or nothing," she said.

At Nixon, she was driven by the goal of making partner in less than the typi-

cal eight to 10 years.

"I didn't want to be the weakest link I didn't want people to feel like I wasn't carrying my own weight. I definitely didn't know how to tone it down. I really didn't," she said.

She still works early in the morning, at night before bedtime, and at least one weekend day. And she never goes out for lunch unless it's business-related, but she schedules work around her family now, especially her sons' schedule.

"I can say to someone, 'You want to meet Friday at 5, but I can't. I'm going to my son's basketball game.' I can kind of control my destiny," she said.

It's part of the culture at Bond Schoeneck & King where the office is full of colleagues in similar family situations.

"It's almost expected because we're all of the same age and stage," she said.

Dixon's advice to young lawyers is to "align yourself with a firm that has the same culture and values you do."

"Do your due diligence on the firm itself. Especially in Rochester, we are rich in legal talent, but the firms are all very different," she said.

"Find one that fits your personality because I think you're going to have a much more stable career, and a stable life, and it won't seem like such a job," Dixon said.

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