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Gator100 Honoree Charles Jimerson: 'Get out there and prove yourself'

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(https://www.law.ufl.edu/flalaw/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Jimerson_Charlessmall.jpg)By Laura Hogan

Charles Jimerson (JD 05) supported special ops missions as a former active duty Combat Meteorologist in the U.S. Air Force. He also studied business administration in college. Yet he always had a bit of an entrepreneurial vision.

A Jacksonville attorney, Jimerson had just received a job offer from a client as an in-house lawyer. However he realized he would rather serve a larger group of clients and continue practicing at a firm. The client urged him to start his own firm instead.

"Any good professional or businessman always has a moment where they get sick of being Robin and they want to become Batman," Jimerson said. "A lot of that was in my DNA."

So he started Jimerson & Cobb, a boutique business law firm that focuses on the construction, financial services and community association industries, with litigation as the firm's specialty.

"We are legal firefighters," he said. "We help businesses put out most any fire that they possibly could encounter."

Jimerson & Cobb was recently named to the inaugural Gator100, a list of the 100 fastest-growing Gator-owned or Gator-led business in the world, according to growth rates calculated by the accounting firm Ernst and Young. The firm was ranked 62nd with a compounded annual growth rate of 38.45 percent.

For two years in a row, the firm has also been ranked one of the top 10 places to work in Jacksonville, as well as one of the fastest growing companies in the city, Jimerson said.

Jimerson credits the firm's success to the hard work and "pristine talent" of his team of attorneys and staff.

"The lawyers and the staff at the firm are incredibly motivated and dedicated professionals," He said. "I'm just one small cog at this firm."

Jimerson said that initially convincing established companies to hire a younger lawyer and law firm was one of the biggest challenges in starting his own firm. Larger companies often stuck with better-known firms.

"In the career field of law, there are these established firms that are 800 pound gorillas," Jimerson said. "And they have this bench depth of resources, of lawyers that have these substantial relationships and experience."

Over time, the firm developed a track record of proven results that helped it overcome some of the initial challenges of being a newer firm.

"You've got to get out there and prove yourself. You have to convey your value. You have to exceed client expectations," Jimerson said. "Represent your clients as if you're representing yourself."

"At the end of the day, make no mistake, it boils down to sheer hard work," he said.

Jimerson advises law students to get jobs at law firms and prove themselves to their employers through hard work.

"Law students would do themselves a benefit by getting out there and getting a real world experience with law firms, forming real-world relationships with potential employers and proving themselves and their personal accountability while on the job rather than in an academic environment," Jimerson said.

As an alumnus, Jimerson said he views UF Law as a place to turn to if he needs employees, referrals, friends or other help.

"It's a network. It's this built-in foundation that its graduates are able to come back and touch when they're in times of need," he said.