

Steve Brandner

> Class of '05

by Heather Conn



WHEN Steven Brandner practised law in downtown Vancouver, focused on commercial leasing, his clients were mostly lawyers, mid-level managers and organizations. With some, he could send a quick memo to them or their lawyer, get a response, and a deal was sealed. "Since it wasn't their money, they were much less cost-sensitive than the clients I have now, such as homeowners," says the 2005 UBC Law grad.

Brandner was still a relative rookie in the profession when he arrived in Vernon, BC in December 2008 as junior associate at Davidson Lawyers. He now

faced yet another learning curve: whole new areas of law to practise, such as wills. He said that he found the transition of working in commercial leasing, real estate, and wills and estates at a nine-person firm "nerve-racking" at first. Besides, the region's residential housing boom dried up right after he arrived. Could he thrive in a smaller centre like Vernon?

He now spends more time explaining legal concepts to clients, he says; they often require more hand-holding than his previous clients. Brandner considers the law involved in his current work, such as house-purchase requirements,

less sophisticated, and as a result he uses simpler instructions. "It's a challenge," he says.

But Brandner's busy, loves the greater variety of work and says he finds it rewarding to act as the go-to person for a client's entire family. When he worked at Boughton Law Corporation, a 50-lawyer firm in Vancouver, his life of "virtual anonymity" focused on long hours of work in Bentall Tower Three and a daily commute from Port Coquitlam.

Now, he lives six minutes from the office, knows more neighbours, works fewer hours and enjoys more relaxation. Lifestyle was a

key draw for him and wife Marina: Kalamalka Lake lies five minutes from their home, with skiing nearby at Silver Star Mountain Resort. Brandner also likes to curl, golf and camp. The couple, with two children aged three and five, met in Vernon years before Brandner entered law.

"It's easy to get involved and to get to know people quickly," he says. From Monday-night beach volleyball to leadership at the Okanagan Science Centre and other volunteer work, he's tied to the community and likes running into clients and their families while shopping or at a local park. ■