

# City's banking industry draws Lewis back to her home

## Balch & Bingham attorney attracted to the challenge of job

BY TY WEST | STAFF

Many young girls grow up wanting to be a nurse or a princess. But for as long as she can remember, Debra Lewis wanted to be a lawyer.

So in a way, you could say Debra Lewis is fulfilling her lifelong dream every time she walks into work as a partner at Balch & Bingham LLP.

"As a young girl, I couldn't think of anything else I wanted to be," she said. "It was always part of the plan and I love it."

The Birmingham native, who graduated from Cumberland School of Law at Samford University, got her first job in the legal field in Montgomery after law school.

As her practice grew, she had an office in both Montgomery and Birmingham, and began spending more time in Birmingham, so her family moved back to her hometown.

Now, her career has come full circle.

"I thought I would be coming right back, but I didn't come back for 21 years," she said.

For someone who specializes in banking law, it was a great move.

"This is where it's happening," she

said.

Lewis represents several banks and banking holding companies and previously served as general counsel for a large corporation.

She said the challenge of her job is what attracted her to banking law.



**Debra Taylor Lewis**

**Age:** The back side of 35!

**Title:** Partner

**Company:** Balch & Bingham LLP

**What one word would you use to describe yourself?** Optimistic

**What business accomplishment are you most proud of?** I would like to continue my life's mission and hope that accomplishment lies in the future.

**Who is your mentor?** My father

**Where do you see yourself in 10 years?** Serving my clients at an even higher level and bringing along the next generation of service-oriented young professionals.

**What is your hobby?** I have many, including travel, but my favorite is hanging out at the lake with my husband and yellow lab.

**What's your favorite restaurant in Birmingham?** My screened porch with my husband grilling! Chez Fon Fon is a close second.

Whether it's a problem with a municipal bond or a defaulted loan, Lewis likes playing the role of problem solver.

"I enjoy the challenge of taking all the pieces and putting them together," she said.

"I like helping with something that has gone wrong."

In addition to her career, Lewis is also active in promoting women's issues and with the Humane Society.

She has also been active in the Birmingham Rotary Club and the Junior League.

With Lewis approaching the final stretch of her legal career, she's looking



Lewis

to leave her mark on the next generation of lawyers to come through Balch & Bingham.

"I would like to bring other young people along," she said. "I would like to help them avoid some of the pitfalls that I faced."

Lewis said she wants to help teach young lawyers the lessons that aren't necessarily in text books or taught at law schools, such as the business end of being a lawyer and how to develop clients.

"Those are things that don't necessarily come naturally and they are not taught in law school."

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