

# Blair Wood

## Prepared for a Challenge



By Krisha Chachra

Photos by Bonnie A. Bounds

neatly hanging in her downtown Blacksburg office, Blair Wood has four tailored jackets waiting for an unpredictable day. Her impressive flat-screen desktop display shares space with precisely stacked briefs and documents. Whether it is court, meeting with a client or attending an event, Wood is ready to tackle the job, even if it means staying at the office all night. “There is space for a couch right there,” she points by the window. “I need one for the all-nighters.”

“At law school, I was a senior articles editor for the law review. Creekmore Law Firm submitted an article, and I met James Creekmore,” she says. “I was seeking a clerkship and asked him about it. We agreed, and I served as clerk the last year of school.”

When she graduated as valedictorian of her class in 2010, Creekmore offered her a full time position. Wood, 33, is now an attorney at the Creekmore Law Firm on North Main Street. “Interestingly, I published an article about the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, and now I’m defending gas and oil companies,” she says. “It’s all so interesting.”

Getting to the New River Valley, however, was quite a circuitous route. Wood graduated from high school in Utah at 16 and moved to Kentucky on a full scholarship to Berea College. “That was my first exposure to the South,” she says. “I fell in love the mountains and scenery.”

After two years, Wood got on a Greyhound bus and traveled back West to enroll in the University of Nevada at Las Vegas. After finishing a degree in environmental administration in 1998, she took a temporary job teaching environmental education and survival skills to high school kids through a program at Indiana University.



“I ended up living four hours from Gary (whom she met at Berea College and who would later become her husband). He was still in Kentucky, and we’d go camping often. I think that’s when I realized I want to live in this area long-term,” she recalls.

Before she committed to the place and to the man, she needed more adventure. Wood journeyed to Tahiti and Africa and backpacked through the bush in Zimbabwe and Zambia. When she returned, she moved in with Gary in Maine. The couple eloped, and when they missed the Appalachian Mountains and lifestyle, they moved to Tennessee. Gary worked as a botanist, and Wood worked with the City of Oak Ridge police department.

“I started as a patrol officer in a high drug, high crime area. I was a training officer for the dive team and later became a coroner,” she recalls. Wood worked on the force for six years, then applied to law school. “It was something that I always wanted to do. We had just purchased a farm so I didn’t think I was going to go, I just wanted to apply,” she states.

Appalachian School of Law in Grundy, Va., offered her a full scholarship. With Gary supporting her dream, she moved away to start law school. When she landed the job in Blacksburg, she and Gary packed up and moved.

Wood is a member of the Virginia Women’s Attorney Association in the New River Valley, Rotary International, the Roanoke Blacksburg Technology Council and the American Business Women’s Association. “I think it is important for building camaraderie. Creekmore focuses its practice in particular areas, so if we can’t help someone, I can refer people to other firms who can. It works both ways and is good for business,” she says.

Wood is impressed with the business community. As a member of the Montgomery Chamber of Commerce, she feels like the business community is very welcoming. “In this line of work, people choose attorneys because they trust them. Creekmore Law Firm encourages employees to participate in community events, which is one reason I love working here,” she says.

Just like the suits in her office are ready when needed, Wood is prepared for the demands of her work, “This profession is a lifestyle, not a job. I want to be available to people who trust me and ask for help.”

*Krishna Chachra is a native of Blacksburg, a Ph.D. candidate at VT and a member of Blacksburg’s Town Council and is an organizer for Up on the Roof, Blacksburg’s Creative Professional’s mixer. She is a regular columnist and author who has reported and hosted shows for public radio and television. Her book about returning to Blacksburg, Homecoming Journals, may be found online or in local bookstores. Email her at kchachra@aol.com.*

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## festivals & events

### november



- Weekends in November | “Mystery at Mountain Lake”
- Nov 1-30 | “Feathers, Fleece’n’Fine Arts”
- Nov 3 | “Lost Communities of Virginia”
- Nov 5 | Holidays Start with Gospel Singing
- Nov 5 | Narrows Craft Fair
- Nov 6 | Glass Blowing 101: Make Your Own Ornament Ball
- Nov 11 | Veterans’ Memorial Park
- Nov 20 | Community Thanksgiving Dinner Potluck

### december

- Dec 3 | Pembroke Christmas Parade - 5:00 pm
- Dec 3 | “A Civil War Christmas by Candlelight At the Andrew Johnston House”
- Dec 4 | Pearisburg Christmas Parade - 4:00 pm
- Dec 7 | Lights on to Remember Pearl Harbor – the Sacrifice and Hope.
- Dec 8 | Narrows Christmas Parade - 7:00 pm



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