

THE TICKER

MEET
THE
CEO

KEVIN SULLIVAN

IN THESE DAYS OF EMPLOYMENT MUSICAL CHAIRS, THERE AREN'T many top executives who have spent their entire careers with one group. Kevin Sullivan is one of the rare few. The new CEO of Winstead PC—he took the reins Jan. 1—first joined the firm in 1982, fresh out of law school at the University of Texas. At the time, there were 62 other attorneys at Winstead; that number has since grown to 265. Much of the growth can be attributed to Sullivan. Since he took a leadership role in the firm's hiring program in 2009, more than 50 attorneys have been added.

"I saw there was a lot of enthusiasm in people to move to a firm of our size," Sullivan says. "We can price competitively for legal services, but be broad enough to provide virtually all legal services a business needs."

The full-service firm, which is especially known for handling real estate and financial matters, has offices in Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, San Antonio, and The Woodlands, plus Charlotte, N.C., and Washington, D.C.

Sullivan will serve a four-year term as CEO. "You wouldn't stay in one place for 28 years if you didn't like the firm and the people and the work you're doing there," he says.



TITLE: CEO

AGE: 53

FAMILY: I met the woman who would become my wife, Leslie, in law school. We got married a few years after that, and we have three kids we're very proud of. Our oldest, Audrey, is in law school at Southern Methodist University; our son, Ryan, just graduated from UT and is working in Austin; and our youngest, Shelby,

is a freshman at the University of Colorado.

FIRST JOB: I was a drug salesman for the Vicks company. My territory was Iowa, and I drove around in a little company car and went from pharmacy to pharmacy selling cough drops. I was dealing with different people every stop, 10 stops a day. I think experience like that—sales-oriented, in the public—is really good for you. It helps you to learn how to size up a person quickly, figure out what they're after and their angle on things, and try to provide whatever service or product you have in your arsenal that that particular person

needs. That's a skill that people use no matter what.

DREAM JOB: I've always enjoyed the mountains, so maybe some job in the mountains, near ski slopes. I hope [being Winstead's CEO] is the dream job.

MANAGEMENT STYLE: It's supportive, so that all of our attorneys and other employees can contribute in a way consistent with strengths. But it's also my job to keep in mind an overall vision for the firm so that in every practice area we deliver extraordinary service.

STRENGTHS: I think I'm honest and accessible, and hopefully I'll try and set a good example for others. Because I

do actually believe this is a good firm. I have the advantage of believing what I'm selling, which is of course extremely helpful.

WEAKNESSES: Probably impatience. Someone was just teasing me that I won't be able to do everything in the first 30 days that I'll want to do, and I'll probably need to be reminded of that. I want to accomplish so much, but you do have to prioritize.

BEST ADVICE

RECEIVED: To take a limited number of objectives and to work hard at achieving those. Give it your all to achieve a limited number of goals, as opposed to a scatter-shot approach. Pick the most important ones, of course.

TYPICAL DAY: I'm trying to spend half my time still practicing with clients, then 50 percent with the CEO administrative responsibilities. We've got eight offices, and I'm going to want to

spend some time in all eight of those offices.

GOALS: We want to be regional to super-regional; that's kind of our spot. We get calls all the time, asking us to become part of a national firm. We routinely do not get into those discussions because I think our firm wants to take advantage of that regional size. We do want to grow, however. I would say, though, what's really more important than setting a number or head count is that we continuously maintain and improve the quality of our attorneys.

FAVORITE BOOK: I just finished the Mickey Mantle biography [*The Last Boy: Mickey Mantle and the End of America's Childhood*] by Jane Leavy. It was really good. I also like to read history books, and John Grisham. We're definitely not *The Firm*.—BRADFORD PEARSON



TELEVISION

The only show I watch dependably is Dallas Cowboys football games. Everything else is just to accommodate my spouse.