

# Alumni Spotlight Series

## Meet the Founders

### Spotlighted TJOGEL Founder: Amy Maxwell



#### **Please briefly introduce yourself.**

I grew up in a community of less than two thousand people called Liberty City. It was so small we could not get cable television service or pizza delivery. Liberty City is on the outskirts of Kilgore, Texas—home of the legendary East Texas Oil Field.

I graduated from the University of Texas in 2001 with a Bachelor of Arts in Government with Highest Honors. Before attending law school, I worked for a few years in Texas politics, first as a media aide and scheduler for Comptroller Carole Keeton Strayhorn and then as the scheduler for Lt. Governor David Dewhurst.

#### **What positions have you held since graduating from UT Law? What do you do now?**

I am fourth generation oil and gas. My great-grandfathers, grandfather, and father drilled and operated wells in Texas. I started my legal career at Locke Lord LLP in Austin as an associate and lobbyist for three years but wanted to focus exclusively on oil and gas law and policy, so I went to work at the Railroad Commission as Chief of Staff and Legal Counsel to Commissioner David Porter. Working at the Commission gave me a deep understanding of how the interrelationship of policy, regulations, and politics drive the energy industry in Texas. I saw the opportunity to use my Commission experience to assist companies in developing oil and gas resources across Texas at a transformative time for our industry. In August 2013, I started my own business providing legal, legislative, and regulatory representation and consulting services to independent oil and gas companies.

#### **What inspired you and the other founders to start TJOGEL?**

Nic Franklin, Brandon Seale, and Cynthia Redwine are the true founders—they came up with the idea. When they approached me with the idea for what eventually became the Journal, I could not believe the University of Texas law school did not have an academic journal dedicated to energy. In a sense, what inspired me the most was the need to do something about that. The others knew I had worked in politics before law school and asked me to help them with fundraising and development. So, I dusted off my old Rolodex and started making fundraising calls.

#### **What were some of the difficulties you faced in trying to start a new Journal at the Law School?**

At the time, it did not seem that difficult because we each focused on the parts that we enjoyed the most. For me, that was fundraising. The first two donors to the Journal were small oil companies based in Kilgore. It wasn't always easy to explain the concept of a student-edited journal to potential donors, but I kept at it, and eventually Baker Botts, Vinson & Elkins, Scott Douglass & McConnico, Exxon, and Chevron were sponsors, along with many others. We raised more money that first year than any other UT Law journal had done in history.

#### **To what extent do you use knowledge/skills gained through TJOGEL in your career?**

My legal career has mirrored my experience with TJOGEL. I learned that hard work and audacity could make a great idea a reality. It is okay to simultaneously color inside and outside the lines. I also learned to recognize my own strengths and weaknesses. One reason I have been able to start my own company is I am not afraid to ask for help and am eager to offer help.

#### **Do you have any advice for current students looking to begin their legal career?**

Listen to your instincts about where your interests and talents lie. If you end up in a career choice that doesn't make you happy, make a change. Or, if after being in a job for a few years, you realize it is not what will fulfill you long-term, explore other opportunities.

Don't be afraid to take risks. If you look at the four founders, we have all started our own companies. Nic runs a land and mineral data company start-up. Brandon formed an exploration and production company and recently sold it to become the president of a midstream entrant into Mexico. Cynthia owns her own law firm, providing legal and business advice to clean energy companies. I am looking forward to us all being back together next spring to celebrate the Journal and its continued success, due to the leadership, commitment, and creativity of the TJOGEL boards and staff over the past ten years.

