

[Is Your Firm Prepared for the Transition from Baby Boomer Lawyers?](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on January 3rd, 2013

I am a college football fan. Even so, I have grown very weary of watching bowl games. So far, the only two games that have kept me interested were the Chick-fil-A Bowl (See: [Texas A&M, Johnny Manziel help Chick-fil-A Bowl, ESPN draw historic TV ratings](#)) and the [Rose Bowl](#) (See: [No longer the little brother, Michigan State shines in Rose Bowl win](#)).

I recently saw this headline: [Young Man's Game: How Old Is Too Old for College Coaches?](#) The photo on the first page was [Mack Brown](#). I have long admired him, going back to when he was the head coach at Tulane and later University of North Carolina. Does anyone, including the most ardent UT fans, think the transition was handled well?

Does any Florida State fan think the way [Bobby Bowden](#) transitioned out of coaching was handled well? Take a look at: [Bobby Bowden's New Gig Sure Sounds like FSU's way of Saying Sorry, Doesn't It?](#)

Does any Dallas Cowboys fan think the way [Tom Landry](#) was transitioned out of coaching was handled well? Take a look at: [Why Tom Landry died a Giants fan.](#)

I am not saying that any of these great football coaches should have continued coaching. I am simply saying that by not planning earlier for their transition to retirement, Texas, FSU and the Cowboys created a messy transition.



Many law firms are creating the same potential messy transition. There are many baby boomer lawyers in large or medium law firms making lots of money. In some cases those lawyers are not bringing in the business, or billing the hours that justify what they are making.

They are “coasting” to retirement and as long as their firm is willing to pay them big bucks, they will not retire. Even if they are not making big bucks, many baby boomer lawyers have not planned for retirement and not saved enough money over the years to retire. See: [Boomers Forced to Retire Face Unexpected Challenges](#)

Law firms either usher those lawyers out of the firm in ways the baby boomer lawyers greatly resent, or they allow those lawyer to continue making huge sums of money in ways the top producing young lawyers resent. Neither situation is healthily for the firm.

If you are a regular reader, you might recall that for baby boomer lawyers I wrote: [Are You a “Steward” for Your Firm’s Next Generation?](#) For young lawyers I wrote: [My guide to working with baby boomers](#). Neither addressed baby boomers from a law firm perspective.

How can a law firm avoid the transition and retirement of its baby boomer lawyers? When a coach, or a lawyer is at the peak of his or her career (around 50), that is the time to work out a transition plan. If a law firm waits until lawyer’s business, and/or production is declining, and his anticipation and need of maintaining the status quo is rising, the firm, the lawyer, or both will suffer the consequences.

What is your firm doing to transition baby boomer lawyers to their retirement?

P. S. I have to add that I enjoyed watching the Sugar Bowl also. (See: [Oklahoma takes down Alabama to win Sugar Bowl](#)).

Cordell Parvin Blog

DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LAW FIRM RAINMAKERS

Cordell M. Parvin built a national construction practice during his 35 years practicing law. At Jenkins & Gilchrist, Mr. Parvin was the Construction Law Practice Group Leader and was also responsible for the firm's attorney development practice. While there he taught client development and created a coaching program for junior partners. In 2005, Mr. Parvin left the firm and started Cordell Parvin LLC. He now works with lawyers and law firms on career development and planning and client development. He is the co-author of ***Say Ciao to Chow Mein: Conquering Career Burnout*** and other books for lawyers. To learn more visit his Web site, www.cordellparvin.com or contact him at cparvin@cordellparvin.com.