

Q&A with Marcus Driller, Senior Legal Counsel at Fisher & Paykel Healthcare

Marcus talks about what excites him at Fisher & Paykel Healthcare, in the community, and away from work, and who has inspired him professionally.

This is the fifth in a series of Q&As with winners of the CLANZ Wigley + Company award for contribution to the community.

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● ***What attracted you to the legal profession?***

It might sound a bit clichéd, but it was to help people. My grandmother was devastated that I didn't become a doctor, but I thought being a lawyer could help me improve the lives of people who needed help. I originally intended to go into family law, but I've ended up in corporate law.

● ***What excites you about your work now?***

It's very exciting working in the team at Fisher & Paykel Healthcare because everyday we're coming up with new products and medical devices to improve the care of people. It's exciting seeing new products developed that improve people's outcomes and change their lives and their families' lives. It's very rewarding to contribute to the team work that achieves that.

● ***Who has inspired you in the profession?***

My aunt Judith McMillan, a family lawyer in Porirua and the first lawyer I knew, was very inspiring. She was passionate about helping people, doing battle for her clients. Cameron Fleming, my first boss at Russell McVeagh, really knew what it was to be a trusted adviser and inspired me to build the skills to be able to do that. And Caroline Quay, my current boss, inspires me to be an excellent in house lawyer.

● ***Work / life balance – how do you achieve that?***

That's a constant challenge, but I think it's important to make commitments outside of



work where other people are relying on you. I have my wife and two boys, and the family is now complete with the arrival of my daughter, Abby. I joined a hockey team, and I know I'm letting the whole team down if I don't get there. You need to fill your life with other things so work doesn't become all encompassing.

● ***How do you enjoy spending time away from work?***

I love jumping on the trampoline with my two young boys after work. I love sports – hockey, water skiing. And I love music. I play guitar, reasonably badly, but my wife's singing makes up for it.

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● ***What prompted you to get involved in community work?***

Our first son Ethan died in 2007 from a rare condition – he only lived 18 days, all of it in Starship Hospital. That experience made me realise how temporary life is, and I wanted to be able to leave something lasting behind, to make a difference in other people’s lives. Russell McVeagh worked with Cure Kids and I volunteered to manage the relationship. It struck a chord with me. From there I sought out other ways of helping people, and together with some friends we formed the Tableside Charitable Trust to meet people’s needs in the community.

● ***What community work has given you the greatest satisfaction?***

Through Tableside we have formed a strong relationship with kids at the Dingwall Trust foster home and we give them Christmas presents each year. And I had a strong personal connection with what we called Eva’s jumble sale, a fundraiser for a young girl who had been in Starship with Ethan and had effectively never been able to leave hospital. We’ve done a whole variety of work – painting out graffiti in local areas, helping wheelchair bound people with

gardening, sharing the importance of getting to know your neighbours and be connected to your community.

● ***What do you get out of it?***

You get back so much more than you put in. It reminds you how much you have to be thankful for. The trust has been recognised by the Auckland Council as a great model for what Auckland communities should be like, and it’s very rewarding to be helping people at a community level.

● ***What’s the best piece of work advice you ever received?***

Don’t let the urgent get in the way of the important – I was told that recently, and it’s very good advice.

● ***What advice would you give to young lawyers?***

At the end of your career it won’t be how much money you’ve made that will give you satisfaction when you look back, but the friendships you’ve made, the time you’ve spent sharing your skills with people in need, and being committed to a cause bigger than yourself. Get involved in your communities, because you’ll get so much more back than you ever put in.

Wigley+Company

PO Box 10842
Level 7/107 Customhouse Quay, Wellington
T +64(4) 472 3023 E info@wigleylaw.com

and in Auckland
T +64(9) 307 5957

www.wigleylaw.com