

By definition, an entrepreneur is a risk-taking innovator, a contractor of sorts who begins with only an idea and is then able to transform it into a viable product or business. Leadership skills possessed by an entrepreneur include the ability to manage, organize, negotiate and accept change and/or the possibility of failure. Usually a highly creative individual, an entrepreneur imagines new solutions or new products and seizes the opportunity to profit from them.

Solid Foundation for Life and Entrepreneurial Spirit

THIS ALSO DEFINES MATT BROUGHTON, a member of the Ferrum College class of 1980 and a Senior Partner at the prestigious law firm of Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore in Roanoke, Virginia. A self-described “problem solver,” Broughton is often involved in five or six businesses at a time. One of his most recent ventures is Brolero, LLC, which came about when he partnered with Louis Scutellero, of Mario Industries, to develop an attorney-specific rolling briefcase to address his own professional needs. Since then Brolero has expanded to also carry a complete line of high-quality office products, including lighting, furniture and accessories. (Brolero.com)

With manufacturing facilities located in the Roanoke Valley, a local workforce and the use of as many resources from regional vendors as possible, Broughton sees his partnership with Mario Industries as a strong connection to the Ferrum College motto “Not Self, But Others.”

Also in keeping with the College motto, in 2002 Broughton helped found the Southwest Virginia Business Development Association, a business professional group that nurtures entrepreneurial activity and new business ventures.

Broughton, who was born in Dinwiddie, Virginia, and whose family members were tobacco farmers in North Carolina, was the first of his family to attend college, and he attributes his faith and strong work ethic to his upbringing by his mother, who instilled in him a desire to set and achieve his goals.

After high school, Broughton applied only to Ferrum College, where he was active on campus and lived in Chapman and Bassett Halls, and finally, as a result of his academic achievement, he lived in a Scotts Honors apartment. He fondly recalls Sam Payne as “a wonderful mentor, eccentric and brilliant” who pushed Broughton to do his very best. He believes that “Ferrum gave me a wonderful opportunity” so that with his Political Science associate degree in hand, Broughton was well prepared to achieve a bachelor’s degree from the University of



Matt Broughton '80

Virginia and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Richmond, T.C. Williams School of Law.

As a senior partner at Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore, Broughton oversees hundreds of cases and multiple lawyers all over the United States, representing clients in complex business and personal matters, ranging from business to personal injury. Broughton has also achieved the status of airline transport pilot, with commercial and multi-engine ratings, and regularly operates multi-engine aircraft in his business and personal life. He was recently named “2012 Roanoke Product Liability Litigation Lawyer of the Year” and included in the 2013 Best Lawyers in America for Personal Injury Litigation/Plaintiffs, Product Liability Litigation/Plaintiffs (2010–2013), and was dubbed a Legal Eagle for Product Liability Litigation by *Virginia Living* magazine.

Broughton continues his relationship with Ferrum College. He is a former Alumni Board of Directors (ABOD) member, and served a term as president of ABOD and ex-officio Board of Trustees member as well. He believes that his skills, his energy and his “awesome” career are gifts from God and Ferrum College. Says Broughton, “The College and the people of Ferrum inspire students, share many good life lessons and instill a unique entrepreneurial spirit that sets a solid foundation for life and career.”

Broughton currently lives in Roanoke, Virginia, and has been married to his high school sweetheart, Liz, for 30 years. They have two daughters, Casey, who recently graduated magna cum laude from VCU with a degree in anthropology, and Abby, who is currently a sophomore at Virginia Tech in the Pamplin School of Business.