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Georgia Southern University

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In 1998, Georgia Southern University had less than 14,000 students enrolled, had just begun using the semester system, and graduated valedictorian Rachel Edwards with a BBA in Finance with an Emphasis in Real Estate. Today, Rachel has been practicing for 10 years and is the owner of Wright & Edwards, P.C.

The truest test of Rachel's business aptitude was the fall of the housing market, because while her qualifications read, “Rachel Edwards, Attorney at Law” she is also a business-woman. “To be able to operate your own business you have to have a business education,” said Rachel. As a business owner she not only manages her legal practice but also administers the hiring and firing, if necessary, keeping overhead costs low to balance out the decline of the economy, managing payments on her building and phone and internet usage; “when you own your own business you also own your building,” says Rachel. Currently, Rachel keeps two full time paralegal assistants and is always looking to hire one part time assistant.

Working part time is how Rachel got her start. She started working as a title abstractor for local attorney, Anne Moore, the summer of her sophomore year.”I had in my mind that I wanted to go to law school and knew that I needed some sort of experience,” said Rachel about applying to Mercer University School of Law. In 2001, Rachel graduated from the Walter F. George School of Law at Mercer University and began practicing full time with Wallace Wright, another local attorney. In October of that year she was notified that she had passed the Georgia bar exam.

Soon thereafter, Rachel became a partner in the firm and the firm was renamed Wright & Collier, P.C. It was just Rachel and Wallace at the firm until 2005, when Rachel’s husband, John, joined the practice. In 2008, Wallace retired from the firm; however the firm still operates under the name Wright and Edwards, P.C. Wallace’s office remains open in case he ever wished to return, even just for a visit. “We’ll keep the name because we are still good friends,” said Rachel, “it’s history.”
Rachel continues to focus on real estate and helps clients with estate planning, probate and other transactional matters. She aids clients who are starting new businesses, helping them throughout the incorporation process. She also deals with existing business owners looking to sell their business or to buy another existing business. “A lot of times we have clients who are already in the business and they are just buying out their competition.”

As far as students go, Rachel says to “have fun while you can and don’t rush through it.” She credits her professors at Georgia Southern with teaching her everything she needed and names Dr. Hatem’s investment class as the hardest she has ever taken. “I remember I failed the first test and the next test I made a 100 and he put a lucky dollar bill in my blue book.”