Job pivot fostered graduate’s interest in law

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Harrison Bond looks forward to combining his interests in business and law after graduation with a position in the corporate group at Jones Walker. (Photo by Kenny Lass)

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Harrison Bond had always envisioned a career as an executive. And for a while, that was his trajectory. But, as was the case with many individuals, the COVID pandemic changed his plans.

Bond graduated from Vanderbilt University with a degree in economics in 2019. He spent his first two years after college working as the executive assistant to Emery Whalen and Brian Landry, the co-owners of QED Hospitality. He joined QED, the group that manages Hot Tin rooftop bar and Jack Rose in the Pontchartrain Hotel on St. Charles Avenue in New Orleans, just months before the COVID-19 pandemic. That experience proved to be a launching point for his career, Bond said.

“So many bars and restaurants had shut down, but Brian and Emery refused to lay anyone off. Instead, they took an entrepreneurial risk and pivoted the company,” he said.

QED Hospitality contracted with hospital systems to set up a call center. At the time, hospitals were trying to reduce the number of in-person, non-emergency visits to limit the spread of the COVID virus. QED’s team went from serving restaurant patrons to assisting hospital patients, helping major hospital systems shift non-emergency visits to telehealth appointments. At 23 years old, Bond was managing a team of 150 people.

“That was an incredible experience. I’m proud that I helped keep our team employed and our patients healthy. Plus, managing our diverse team of former dishwashers, cooks, and sommeliers turned telehealth experts was great professional development for me,” he said.

It was at QED that Bond developed an interest in law.

“The original career path I had in mind was to become an executive. But, I had so much fun in our contract negotiations that I started thinking about a career in law,” he said.

He got accepted to Tulane's joint JD and MBA program, which combined both of his interests.

While at Tulane, Bond became involved with the Law Review at the law school. He loved all of his professors in both Tulane Law School and the A. B. Freeman School of Business. "My favorite classes were anything taught by Ann Lipton or Claire Senot," he said.

He enjoyed his experience in law school so much that he is now pursuing a career in the field.

Following graduation, he will join the corporate group at Jones Walker and pick a specialty within that group after two years. Bond said that he became interested in the area of mergers and acquisitions after taking Ann Lipton's Mergers & Acquisitions course in the law school and Oleg Gredil's Venture Capital & Private Equity course in the business school.

"I am excited to join Jones Walker and learn from all of the experts in the corporate group," he said.

This summer he will be taking the bar exam, and he will start at Jones Walker in the fall.

Bond is looking forward to starting work and is set on remaining in New Orleans for the long term. He got married to a fellow lawyer last October who is also from New Orleans.

"New Orleans is home, and we plan on staying here, hopefully forever," he said.