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Lawyer Quits Job Over Résumé Flap

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There are plenty of ways for young lawyers to get their foot in the door at a blue-chip firm: Have a connection to a partner, clerk for a federal judge, play a role in a high-profile case. Then there are the more creative approaches.

Gregory Hawn, an associate at the Washington, D.C., office of Bracewell & Giuliani, is accused of falsifying his résumé and altering his law school transcript in an effort to get a job at Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw, according to the D.C. Bar Counsel, which has filed a series of ethical charges against Hawn.

The 2003 graduate of American University's Washington College of Law allegedly altered 12 grades on his transcript, raising his grade-point average from 3.12 to 3.59; claimed that he received an academic achievement scholarship and a legal writing award that he had not won; listed himself as co-chairman of an American Bar Association group when he had merely assisted in coordinating the group's activities; claimed he was the program director of a D.C. Bar committee when he was only a member of the group; and falsely represented that he was an "articles editor" on the AU Law Review when he was a "senior editor," according to bar counsel charging documents served on Hawn March 11.

When contacted by *Legal Times* Thursday, Hawn -- who worked in the firm's real estate, energy, finance and business technology practices -- expressed optimism that the charges would be resolved favorably, but declined further comment. Within hours, Hawn had resigned from the firm.

Michael Pate, the managing partner of Bracewell's D.C. office, confirmed that Hawn quit, but declined to comment, except to say that he had been unaware of the allegations. By the end of the day, Hawn's biography was removed from the Bracewell & Giuliani Web site and replaced with a message saying that he was no longer with the firm.

The alleged falsehoods were discovered in spring 2005, when Hawn applied for a position at Mayer Brown's Los Angeles office. A legal recruiter had forwarded one version of Hawn's résumé and transcript to the firm, while Hawn himself sent a different version to the firm. Bar counsel's charges state both copies contained false statements.

Mayer Brown contacted the AU law school's associate dean for faculty and academic affairs, who, according to the charges, asked Hawn to explain the discrepancies. Hawn blamed the problems on a malfunction in the electronic transmission of his transcript from AU's registrar's office.

When contacted by *Legal Times*, Kenneth Geller, managing partner at Mayer Brown's D.C. office, said he was unaware of the incident. He later called back to say it was caught by the firm's general counsel in Chicago. He also said the firm asked American University to look into the matter, but that the firm did not contact the Bar.

D.C. Bar Counsel Wallace "Gene" Shipp Jr. says that his office does not prosecute many cases of résumé inflation. The last one he remembered was in 1985, when a lawyer falsified his credentials when seeking a position at a law school. In that case, Shipp says, the lawyer received a public censure. Hawn's case is scheduled for a hearing on April 26. Shipp could not say what sort of punishment Hawn could face.

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