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Andrew Stroth (JD '99)

## Andrew Stroth: Building a Brand

Andrew Stroth (JD '99) was already running Impact Talent Associates, his sports management and entertainment firm, when he decided to go law school because “something was missing.”

“Once I started my firm, I noticed that the most accomplished agents were lawyers by training,” said Stroth. “It was then that I knew I was lacking in the skills necessary to best represent my clients.”

A law degree raised his profile with clients and improved the quality of his service, Stroth said. Over the years, Stroth has represented NFL quarterbacks Donovan McNabb and Michael Vick, former Bears coach Lovie Smith, Bears wide receiver Brandon Marshall, Miami Heat superstar Dwyane Wade, and others.

The ultimate goal, said Stroth, is to “build athletes into brands beyond sports, which will ensure financial and professional longevity long after they retire. With our strategic plan, we built Dwyane Wade into a global brand and negotiated several multiyear endorsement contracts.”

Stroth took on Vick when the disgraced quarterback returned to the National Football League from a 21-month

prison stint for his part in an illegal interstate dog-fighting ring. Vick was not exactly a fan favorite, but Stroth believed he deserved a second chance. Stroth worked to rebuild Vick’s brand as a player by regaining lost endorsement deals. In July 2011 Stroth negotiated a multiyear endorsement deal with Nike for Vick.

“When we decided to represent Michael Vick after prison, I knew it would be a major challenge, considering his reputation and past,” said Stroth. “But I wanted to help him because he served his time and everyone deserves redemption.”

Stroth also works with corporations to sign athletes for endorsement deals in exchange for equity positions in the company. Stroth negotiated McNabb’s partnership with Vitamin Water prior to the acquisition by Coca Cola. Stroth also represented Fuse Science, a publicly traded company based in Miami and led the negotiations to sign a partnership with golfer Tiger Woods, who was also emerging from a scandal. “We want to innovate in the sports industry and negotiate partnerships for athletes in exchange for equity positions in growth companies.”

Besides his own firm, Stroth is of counsel to the commercial practice group at Handler Thayer, negotiating contracts, endorsements, licensing deals, and business partnerships.

Stroth worked in the Bluhm Legal Clinic’s Children and Family Justice Center when he was a Northwestern student. The example of Larry Marshall (JD '85), founder of the Center on Wrongful Convictions, was a factor that motivated Stroth to work in negotiation and mediation. “It was inspiring to see someone work with so much dedication and passion,” he said. Stroth was an adjunct professor with Bluhm’s Center on

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Negotiation and Mediation from 2005 to 2008 and frequently visits the school to lecture to students in the Negotiations program and participate in panel discussions.

Stroth fondly recalls another moment at Northwestern Law. “In 1997, we invited Illinois Senator Barack Obama to speak at the Law School. To this day, students still remember his inspiring speech at Lincoln Hall.” ■