

# Member Spotlight

## Brandon Smith

Senior Vice President, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary

*Tenneco Inc.*

**In current position for:** 1 and ½ years

**Years in-house:** 10 years

**Law School:** Cornell Law School

**Undergrad:** Hiram College (B.A. in Business Management)

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### **The best thing about my current job is:**

Being a part of a dynamic company that is challenging the way that people think about the transportation industry. When you feel passionate about an organization and its mission – the motivation to reach further every day comes naturally. Tenneco’s vision of pioneering global solutions for cleaner, quieter and safer mobility has always been electrifying to me. Further, the company is one that never rests on its laurels – as evidenced by our recent \$5 billion acquisition of Federal-Mogul. Having the opportunity to lead these types of transformative initiatives has made this role by far the best in my career to date.

### **What I look forward to in my career:**

After we complete our spinoff – having the opportunity to build a brand new company – DRiV Incorporated, with one of the best teams in the industry. With DRiV, our team will be part of a purpose-built organization that is designed to take some of the best components of Tenneco and Federal-Mogul – creating what will effectively be a multi-billion dollar start-up enterprise.

### **The most challenging thing about my current job is:**

Allocating enough time to all of the initiatives that I would very much like to pursue. Time - being a rare and valuable commodity – often requires us to continually hone our skills in the art of prioritization!

## **What I've accomplished as an in-house lawyer of which I'm most proud:**

Developing high performance teams – that are focused on finding the intersection of the company's needs with a team member's individual career aspirations.

## **Most valuable life lesson that I still apply today:**

The Golden Rule is unlimited in its application. Simply focusing on treating others – whether they be team members, customers, suppliers or shareholders – how you would like to be treated, will often help you quickly reach the right decision.

## **My most pivotal career move:**

Joining Tenneco (from Kirkland & Ellis) three months before the 2008 recession hit. That event was the beginning of a series of opportunities that have led to my position today. It also was the second most valuable lesson I have learned in my working career – when others are pulling back – lean forward.

## **Advice I would give to new lawyers, in-house or otherwise:**

Come to work every day with the mindset that you are a business person that happens to be an attorney – not an attorney who happens to be working in a business. When the teams you support recognize the investment you are making in them – they will surely reciprocate by making an investment in you.

## **Hardest lesson I've learned as a lawyer:**

What works well for you is not necessarily what can or should work for those on your team. Building effective teams is about creating an environment where each team member has the opportunity to optimize their personal working style – and unlock their true potential.

## **What I like most about the ACC Chicago Chapter:**

This is a very highly engaged Chapter. It continues to inspire me to reach higher every time I read about the events and activities that its members are pursuing.

## **My favorite pro bono or volunteer activities are:**

As a Department, we have begun to build a great relationship with Bernie's Book Bank. I also sit on the Board of the 100 Club of Chicago – which is an organization that supports the families of fallen police, firefighters and emergency responders.

## **If I were not practicing law, I would probably be:**

While a lifelong dream is to retire on a horse farm – I hope that you will find me helping others in some way shape or form – whether it be teaching or giving back to the communities that have helped me throughout my life.

## **The worst job I ever held was:**

My first job – working as a dishwasher at the age of 14 in a kitchen that often felt like it was over 100 degrees. However, in some ways it was my best job – as it taught me valuable lessons about commitment to finishing what you started.

## **My all-time favorite movie is:**

“The Magnificent Seven” (the original). This movie always reminds me that with organization, preparation and ingenuity – you will always have a shot at overcoming even the steepest of challenges.

## **People may be surprised to learn that I:**

Worked as a firefighter and EMT while I was in college. The days were hot – but nothing replaces the thrill of driving a 35,000 pound truck at speed with a plethora of lights and sirens to announce your arrival.

## **My worst travel experience was:**

Driving through a Tropical Depression in South East Texas. I learned a valuable lesson that day – the Gulf of Mexico does not mix well with the Automatic Transmission Fluid in your pickup truck.

## **My favorite vacation spot is:**

Upstate – New York. It is an unlikely destination for most people, but the scenery is amazing – and the history of the region, including its importance to the development of the economy in the United States, has always been fascinating to me.