



Fairfield native, Larry D. Thomason, Jr., is a practicing attorney in St. Louis who credits Frontier Community College for laying a strong foundation to a successful career.

Thomason, the middle child of three siblings, was the first in his family to attend college. Attending Frontier was a logical first step in 1987 following his graduation from Fairfield Community High School. “Being the first one, I was nervous and unsure about college,” stated Thomason. “Being a small town kid, Frontier provided a nice opportunity to get in, feel it out, and develop my confidence.”

During his first year at Frontier, Thomason bounced around the idea of several possible majors and at a cost that wouldn’t break the bank. “I considered teaching, accounting, and psychology before realizing engineering was a strong possibility.” As the first year of college came to a close, Thomason paid a visit to Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville to look into the civil engineering program. He liked what he found and made the decision to transfer following his graduation from FCC.

By the time his second year of college rolled around, Thomason was definitely more confident and began focusing on the courses geared towards the engineering field. “At the time, Frontier didn’t have enough students to fill the calculus, physics, and chemistry courses,” stated Thomason. “The College staff was very accommodating and allowed me to take five independent study courses with adjunct instructors Tom Bishop for calculus and Ray Demaret for my first year of chemistry. Both instructors provided a great foundation and a good spring board to the university courses.”

Thomason graduated from Frontier Community College in 1989 with the Associate in Science degree and transferred to SIU-E. Because the university was on the quarter’s system, Thomason was able to do a co-op program working for the Illinois Department of Transportation locally during the summer and fall and enrolled at SIU-E during the spring and winter quarters. In May 1993, Thomason completed the Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering graduating magna cum laude.

As a civil engineer, Thomason worked for the City of Highland, Illinois in public works between 1993 and 1997. He obtained his engineering license in 1997. He then began giving thought to a graduate program, wanting something that would be marketable. He considered teaching and business, but ultimately decided on law. He resigned his full-time job at Highland and enrolled at Southern Illinois University School of Law in Carbondale. Thomason received a Juris Doctor degree in 1999 graduating cum laude.

Admitted to the Missouri and Illinois Bar in 2000, Thomason began working for a law firm in Edwardsville focusing on asbestos defense, appellate work, and municipal law. While working on a construction related case, Thomason was recruited by an engineering firm in Collinsville, Illinois. There he practiced engineering as a project manager. Of his many projects, two received special attention. The Poplar Street Reconstruction project in Highland involved the construction of two modern roundabouts. The first roundabout was the first modern roundabout on an Illinois state highway. The Mulberry Road Realignment in Collinsville was a roadway realignment project where the road and bridge were constructed alongside a federal superfund site. Most of the work zone was contaminated. A city representative declared it the most complicated project he ever worked on. Thomason enjoyed the challenge.

In May 2009, Thomason received the Richard B. Teitelman Distinguished Service Award from Legal Services of Eastern Missouri. Engineering awards include the Engineering Excellence Award for Popular Street Reconstruction.

In 2008, Thomason made the decision to open his own private law practice, Thomason Law Firm, L.L.C., where he mainly practices construction law, estate planning, probate, and family law (divorce and child custody).

Thomason still remembers his first meeting with former FCC staff member, the late Carroll Hilliard. "I recall being very thankful for his help," stated Thomason. "I was a shy country kid, first in my extended family to go to college, and quite frankly, ignorant of how higher education worked. I still appreciate Carroll's and former academic advisor Janice Tucker's gentle introduction to academia."

Attending Frontier Community College became a family tradition for the Thomason family. His brother Jason Thomason and sister Pam (Thomason) Schell also attended and graduated from FCC and subsequently obtained their bachelor's degrees. Their parents are Larry and Judy Thomason of Fairfield.