



Exploring the Unanswered Questions Tax Law Through the Eyes of June Summers Haas

When you think of charting unexplored territory and helping to write Michigan history, do you think of...tax law? Probably not, but that's where June Summers Haas would like to enlighten you. As partner at Honigman Miller Schwartz and Cohn LLP, specializing in tax law, and former revenue commissioner for the State of Michigan, Haas is an enthusiastic backer of this intriguing but often overlooked subject. Haas shares her enthusiasm and expertise as chair of the Michigan Chamber of Commerce Tax Policy Committee and as a member of the Michigan Chamber Board of Directors.

Q: Why are you so passionate about tax law?

A: Many of the issues in state tax law have not been decided yet. There

are no exact answers, and that's just fascinating. You get to think about how the law should be, advocate for clients, and see how the system actually works. That's as fun as it gets!

Q: Which of your accomplishments makes you most proud?

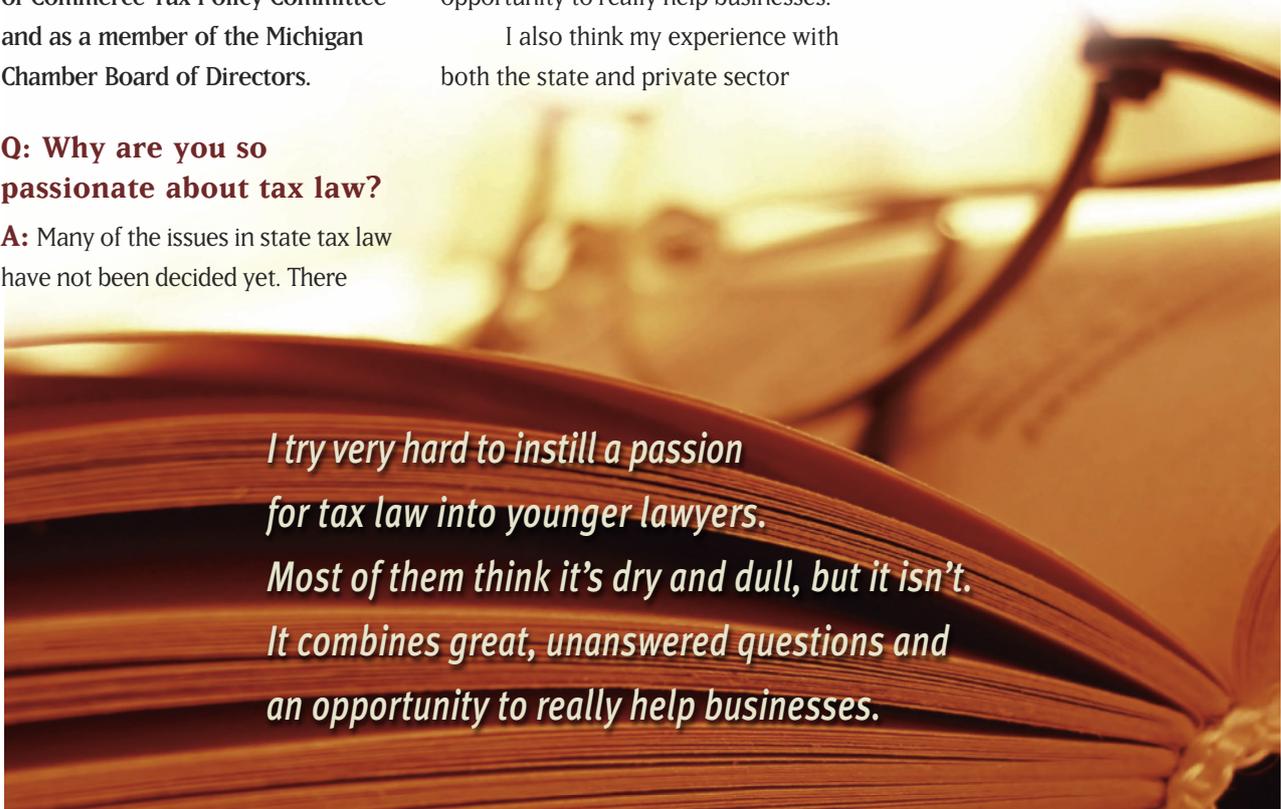
A: It's one that doesn't even come up on the resume. I try very hard to instill a passion for tax law into younger lawyers. Most of them think it's dry and dull, but it isn't. It combines great, unanswered questions and an opportunity to really help businesses.

I also think my experience with both the state and private sector

gives me a valuable perspective. There are a lot of hard-working people in the state who want to do the right thing, and a lot of businesses who want to comply with the law. We need to make it easier for them.

Q: What's it like to be a woman in your field?

A: I am very lucky to follow other groundbreaking women, including my mentor, Joanne Garvey. You get used to being the only woman in the room, and in the end, there's a lot of commonality because we're all pursuing



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the same issues. So, I haven't really encountered any gender-based obstacles. What a great statement.

Q: Where do you see tax law going in the future?

A: I think you'll see more states moving to a gross receipts tax, unless there's a change in federal law. They're also thinking about sales and use taxes. Many tangible products, such as movies, music, and training, are moving to intangible, downloadable services, and that erodes the tax base.

Q: What's your assessment of tax policy in Michigan?

A: First, we shouldn't be making tax law between midnight and 6 a.m. Tax law is so complex that it's really hard to get it right.

It's been a tough year for Michigan because we rewrote our main business tax. Turmoil is inevitable, and it will take a couple of years for the law to settle out as we discover unintended consequences and make adjustments.

I've also seen a positive growth in the Department of Treasury's willingness to give businesses more input into rulemaking. When businesses can provide a perspective on how law affects their business, lawmakers can create policies that are easier to administer and comply with.

To learn more about June Summers Haas, visit www.honigman.com. ●



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