

HIGH PROFILE: HEARTSILL RAGON III

Central Arkansas Risk Management Association Chapter: How did you get started as an attorney?

Heartsill Ragon III: *I am a third-generation lawyer. My grandfather was a lawyer, U.S. congressman and federal judge, and my father was a lawyer, state representative, president of the Arkansas Bar Association and bank president. I was somewhat destined to follow the “family business” from the day I was born.*

Central Arkansas RMA: Tell us something about yourself?

Ragon: *I was born in Fort Smith back at a time when everyone had a horse in the backyard and the annual rodeo was the major summer event. People in Central Arkansas don't quite realize what a “western/cowboy/frontier town” Fort Smith is. I attended undergrad at Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia, as did my father and grandfather. When my father passed away, my mother and I moved to Washington D.C. (Old Town Alexandria, Virginia, to be precise) where she worked for 26 years for Sen. Dale Bumpers. After college, I attended University of Arkansas School of Law in Fayetteville. Upon graduation, I became in-house corporate attorney for Fairfield Communities Inc., a New York Stock Exchange resort development company headquartered in Little Rock. Fairfield developed over two dozen resort and large scale master-planned communities across the United States. At Fairfield, I gained my first experiences in corporate finance and real estate development. My wife, Claudia, and I married in 1987 and we have two adult children, Sydney and Caroline. We also have our first grandchild: Ragon Maureen Clifford. After living in the Heights for 35 years, we moved into the one of the downtown high-rise condominium buildings. Living just five blocks from my office, I should probably walk to work more often.*



Name: Heartsill Ragon III
Company: Gill Ragon Owen, P.A.
 Little Rock, Arkansas
Title: Managing Director, Shareholder
Years in Biz: 35

Noted for his down-to-earth Southern Charm and his experienced professional vision, Heartsill is a Central Arkansas RMA Chapter Favorite. He and his firm continue to be major player in the local market and involved with the community including non-profit and civically. Heartsill originally proposed the popular Commercial Banker of the Year Award. Heartsill and his spouse live in Downtown Little Rock.

RMA: WHAT IS ONE FACT ABOUT YOURSELF OTHERS ARE UNLIKELY TO KNOW?
RAGON: I TOOK A YEAR OFF BETWEEN UNDERGRADUATE AND LAW SCHOOL AND SERVED AS A TELEVISION NEWS REPORTER FOR KATV. FUN JOB; QUESTIONABLE PAY.

Central Arkansas RMA: What is the most important lesson you have learned during your professional career?

Ragon: *Note the skills, tendencies and traits of successful people, and mirror*

those attributes. Notice also the issues confronting people experiencing problems, and avoid those issues.

Cantral Arkansas RMA: Why did you get involved with RMA?

Ragon: *I noticed several years ago that RMA began a series of speaker events that address a number of “back office” issues that bank legal counsel are never exposed to. I particularly remember a breakfast seminar focusing on bank appraisal regulatory issues. I realized that outside bank counsel can be even more valuable to their clients if they become appreciative of the back office business issues in addition to the more traditional legal issues related to their representation. RMA does a great job of providing this education and insight.*

Central Arkansas RMA: How has your firm benefited by your involvement with RMA?

Ragon: *RMA has given our firm a great opportunity to exchange thoughts with RMA’s banking and bank counsel membership on a number of issues ranging from loan documentation questions to defaulted loan workout issues. RMA serves as a great forum pursuant to which “best practices” can be formulated and shared. RMA seems to be the only organization in the state that helps set the standards.*

Central Arkansas RMA: What do you do to unwind, relax and have fun?

Ragon: *As a bank counsel, it is a requirement that you have an adequate golf game. Golf is a great way to develop wonderful friendships, and build and develop business relationships.*

Central Arkansas RMA: Who or What has been the greatest single influence in your career?

Ragon: *Randy Warner, the now-deceased chairman of Fairfield Communities and my father’s law partner from Fort Smith, was a major influence in my life. He recruited me into the world of corporate finance and real estate development, taught me how to find creative answers to difficult problems, and set the bar for professionalism and responsibility.*

Central Arkansas RMA: What advise do you give others who are seeking to advance their career?

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Ragon: *It is important to be appreciative of both the form and the substance of job performance. Certainly, everyone must strive to develop the substantive competence. But, don't underestimate "form". If you have weak presentation skills and a poor professional demeanor and image, clients and customers might not be interested in determining whether you possess any substantive expertise.*

Central Arkansas RMA: What is your favorite RMA Event you have attended?

Ragon: *I enjoy the annual presentation of the Commercial Banker of the Year Award. It a great opportunity to recognize the state's top commercial bankers, along with the banks for whom they work, and the tremendous responsibility that these bankers possess in finding top quality lending opportunities that help build our communities.*

Central Arkansas RMA: What is your favorite restaurant, movie, musician and book?

Ragon: *Restaurant: One Eleven at Capitol Hotel for lunch-- get the Express Lunch.*

Movie: Forrest Gump

Musician: Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes, and Steely Dan (it's a tie)

Book: The Pillars of the Earth by Ken Follett.

Central Arkansas RMA: Who would be present at your Dream Dinner (current or past)?

Ragon: *Jack Donaghy, Liz Lemon, Jenna Maroney and Kenneth Parcell. (Fictional characters from the TV Show "30 Rock" for those who have no appreciation for the world's greatest television comedy.)*

Central Arkansas RMA: Without naming

Names tell us about one of your most interesting business transactions?

Ragon: *Through a series of unusual coincidences, I've had an opportunity to represent a number of Indian banks in connection with their lending activities in the United States. While the loans have been substantial in size, and the security and collateral issues have been challenging, the most interesting aspect of working with these clients has been the opportunity to witness comparable banking standards, deal terminology, documentation approaches, and cultural differences. US bankers take note: Indian bankers regularly convene conference calls in the middle of the night and always fly across the globe in order to attend closing dinners.*

Central Arkansas RMA: In what areas of the legal spectrum does your firm specialize?

Ragon: *Our law firm covers the full spectrum of legal services regularly required by Central Arkansas businesses. We represent the largest banks and institutions in connection with their commercial loan documentation and private equity investments; we represent industries and utility companies in connection with their operations, environmental matters and regulatory matters; we represent some of the state's largest businesses in connection with their labor law compliance and litigation matters; and we serve as counsel in connection with complex litigation, insurance defense, and routine litigation matters.*



'JACK DONAGHY AND LIZ LEMON'