



Top Birmingham Women 2010

Kay Bains – *Bradley Arant Boulton Cummings*

For the better part of the last 30 years, Kay Bains and banking have gone hand-in-glove, just as Kay Bains and practicing law.

But the focus of her career has done a 180-degree turn in the last two years, and it's given her already passionate work a bigger kick.

"I've always loved the intellectual challenge and I thrive on helping my clients solve their problems and meet their goals," said Bains, a partner with Bradley Arant Boulton Cummings LLC. "But the last two years have been particularly fulfilling."

For 28 years and with three different law firms, Bains specialized in helping banks close commercial loans for building.

In the last two, thanks in part to a global economy that has seen funding dry up, she's worked on helping banks sell the loans that have gone bad because of a soft market and the "economic free-for-all."

"When I closed commercial loans, you would focus on the documentation along with the collateral and real estate," said Bains.

"In a note sale, you're looking at loan documentation to see if there were flaws or whether there were changes in collateral when the loan was originally made. There could have been four good solid tenants in a shopping center when the loan was made, but now maybe three of them have gone dark. And instead of a property generating revenues, now it's nothing but a drain. Getting those bad loans off the books is a critical component of a bank's continued well-being."

As much of a change as her focus has been, it's nothing compared to the treatment of female lawyers from when she started in 1980, fresh out of the Cumberland School of Law, to now. It's been 30 years, but one incident still sticks in her craw.

"I remember being with a firm and we were going to the Downtown Club for a celebratory closing lunch with a client," said Bains. "I was



Kay Bains

Age: 62

Title: Partner

Company: Bradley Arant Boulton Cummings LLP

there with eight men and attempted to go to the dining area where the client had reserved a table and would not be admitted because women couldn't go in the Men's Grill.

"The client was outraged and said he'd rather eat at McDonald's with me than at the Downtown Club without me. I was more angry than hurt or embarrassed. It was a defining moment for me."

She remains passionate about her work and it shows in selections to several top lawyer lists.

Bains was also lead counsel for the Vulcan Park Foundation in its effort to restore the historic landmark on Red Mountain.

"I'm not a coordinated person. I don't golf and I can't play tennis," said Bains.

"I told the people here when they hired me that I spent the first 25 years of my career somewhere else and I expect to spend the next 25 with them."