

# THE CP Interview Robert Mead, Jr.

Doris Keeler

*Last year Robert ("Bob") Mead Jr. was named the Corporate Lawyer of the Year in Central Florida. A founding shareholder of the firm Dean Mead, Bob has lived in the area since 1969 and in College Park for the past seven years. His list of career accolades is extensive, but he doesn't pay much attention to them. I met with him in his office on the 15th floor of the Wells Fargo Building downtown, just a mile from his home in the Renaissance in College Park.*

## Did you know you wanted to be a lawyer when you were growing up?

Back when I was going to school it was either law school or med school. There weren't the opportunities there are now. I had an uncle and a cousin that were lawyers on my mother's side. Law was kind of a natural thing for me. It was what I wanted to do.

## Since you weren't living in Florida at the time, how did you choose the University of Florida?

I graduated from Oxnard High School in Oxnard, California, in 1963 and had applied to go to school in California. I had a couple of throwaway transcripts and I sent one to the University of Florida just for fun because my baseball coach went to Florida. About a month before I was to start school at USC, my dad got orders transferring him to the Atlantic Range at Cape Canaveral. There I was with my suitcase going up to Gainesville. I got an undergraduate degree in English at Florida. I graduated on a Saturday, got my books on Sunday, and started law school on Monday.

## What are some of the highlights of your own personal career?

We started Dean Mead in 1980. It's a full-service firm. One of the first things we said was we weren't going to have any offices; now we've got five. I represent primarily physicians. They are a unique clientele. I represent doctors all over the state and some out of state. I'm known as the doctors' lawyer. There are a couple of guys in town that do this but I probably represent more physicians than anyone around. When you represent them you see them in a little different light than when you're in the waiting room an hour. We established an endowed scholarship at the UCF Medical School in my name. That was kind of an honor. We've chosen to focus our charitable contri-

butions in education because we believe a quality education provides the best opportunity for a successful future.

## Why was it named for you?

I can't take credit for the scholarship. It was named for me because I represent so many physicians. I got to [present the ceremonial doctor's] white coat [to] the first guy. He was from Romania. He got a degree in chemical engineering from Georgia Tech and ended up taking a residency in Denver. I was thrilled to meet him and watch him graduate.

## What drew you to College Park and why do you like it?

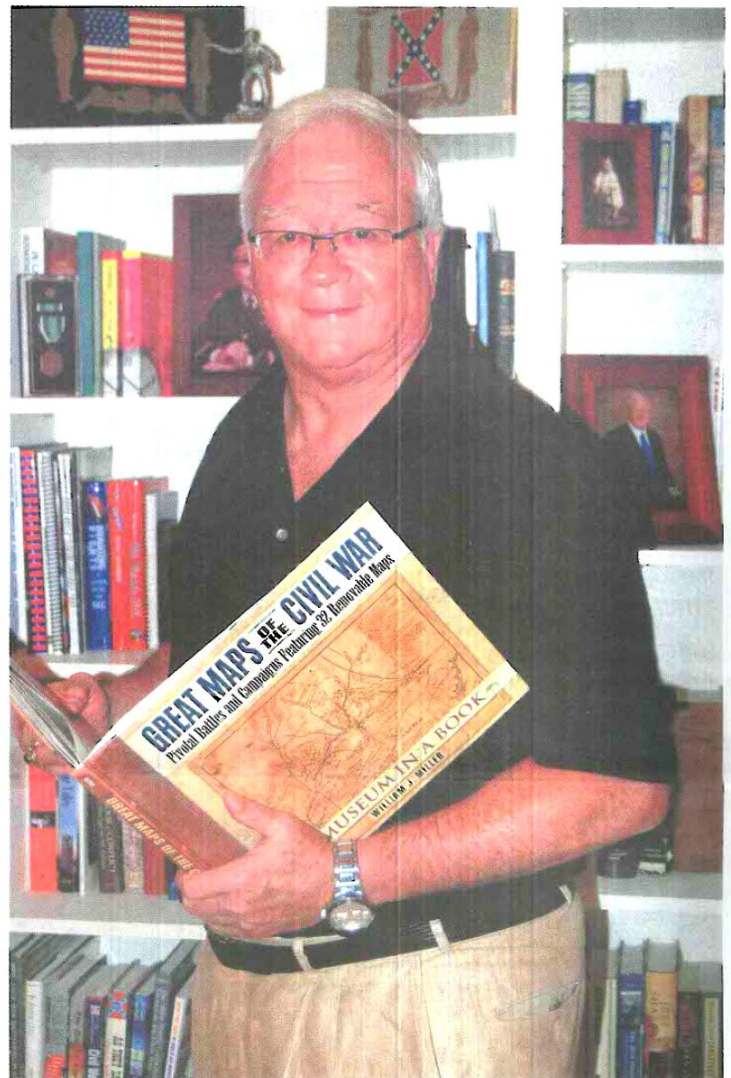
I lived in Longwood but I'd get up at 5:30 and fight the traffic if I wasn't on the road by 7:00. When I went over the hill to come to this office I'd look over across the lake and see the Renaissance. I thought it'd really be cool to live there. It's less than a mile to work and is a great place to live. There seems to be a spirit of collegiality. We walk frequently on the weekends. We walk down to Dubsdread for lunch or down Edgewater. It's just a neat place. They have a lot of places to go, a lot of places to eat. There's not a lot of crime down there. You can walk around and feel safe.

## What would you say people would be surprised to know about you?

I played a little bit of professional baseball. I was drafted by the Houston Colt .45s out of high school. I played a couple of months in the California rookie league. I ran into the wall in Santa Barbara and broke my collarbone and shoulder and now have a pin in there. That was a very short baseball career. Nobody's ever heard of the Houston Colt .45s. They were around in '62 and '63 and then became the Astros. It's a long way from the major leagues.

## What do you like to do for fun?

Gator sports. We've got season tickets to football and baseball. I love baseball because I played it. We try to get up to a lot of the baseball games. I've also been a Civil War buff all my life. My great-great-grandfather grew up in Key West. He moved to Pensacola in the 1850s. I think it was, and when the war broke out he became Secretary of the Confederate Navy. He was in Jeffer-



Bob Mead is a Civil War buff, spurred by his great-great-grandfather's service as Secretary of the Confederate Navy under President Jefferson Davis.

son Davis' cabinet. He was the only one that was in the cabinet for the entire war. ... I haven't seen a whole lot of battlefields, but about three or four. I get three different publications and have a pretty good Civil War library, which I'll never live to read. I can't go into a bookstore without buying a couple of things. It's just always fascinated me.

**Because your dad was a Navy pilot, you moved around a lot. Is traveling something you like to do?**  
We lived overseas, Corpus Christi (Texas), New Jersey, French Morocco, China, California and Florida. I'd like to do more traveling because that hasn't been one of my strong points. There are a lot of places in this country I'd like to see. I'll put

Europe on hold for now.

## What are some other things on your bucket list?

I'd like to spend three days at Gettysburg; that's how long the battle took. I've been there a couple of hours and it really doesn't do it justice. I'd really like to take a couple of weeks and go visit battlefields. I love baseball, so I'd also love to take a trip and go to all of the major league baseball parks. I haven't been to hardly any.

## If you could choose one word to describe yourself, what would it be?

"Organized" is probably the right word. It's not a great attribute, but it's very helpful in law.