

Barclay Damon Atty On NFL Career, Writing Books And ALS

By **Adrian Cruz**

Law360 (March 8, 2021, 12:58 PM EST) -- Barclay Damon's Tim Green is a man of many talents. The Syracuse University graduate was a first-round draft pick of the National Football League's Atlanta Falcons in 1986 and a New York Times bestselling author, along with decades spent at the New York-based firm helping to develop and grow its energy client base.



Tim Green

In 2016, Green announced that he had been diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, a neurological disease that destroys the nerve cells that control voluntary muscle movement and physical abilities such as speech and movement.

Despite the effects of ALS, Green continues to be involved with the firm and write books using an eye-reading software that converts eye movements into text. Most recently, he released his third book in a baseball-focused children's series called "Baseball Genius," co-authored with ex-New York Yankees star Derek Jeter.

Using the same software, Green spoke with Law360 Pulse on Wednesday about his multifaceted career, living with ALS and his goals for the future. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

What made you decide to be an energy attorney after spending so many years involved in sports both as an NFL player and as a commentator? Was law something you were already considering getting into even during your playing days?

I really wasn't looking to focus on energy, but my best friend from law school, Rick Capozza, was working at Barclay Damon and their biggest client was National Grid. That meant the firm had an abundance of energy lawyers who had developed expertise in energy. My and Rick's job was to grow and diversify the firm's client base. Energy was the obvious answer. I completed all but one semester of law school while I played in the NFL. I would attend school in the off season. I had the time, and I always knew football would end sooner than I'd like.

John Langan was the managing partner. Rick ran the environmental group and was head of marketing. The three of us were good friends and we made a pact that we would build the firm to where the three of us were making seven figures a year, which is kind of outrageous in an upstate law firm. We've had a lot of fun.

How did you help Barclay Damon expand its energy practice?

When I joined Barclay Damon in 1999, National Grid was the anchor of the expansion. I happened to be good friends with the CEO, Bill Davis, and he introduced me to the CEOs or GCs of the companies that were buying their generation assets as they became a delivery company. Soon I had clients who were big players: Orion, NRG, Constellation Nuclear, Brookfield, Reliant and Calpine. Once we were established with them, expanding further became easy because we had so much credibility.

What was your time in the sports world like? Starting off with an eight-year NFL career which led to a move into the broadcasting side, did you ever consider mixing sports and law together?

The answer to this question could fill a book. Fortunately, I wrote that book, called "The Dark Side of the Game."

Broadcasting was great fun. Lots of nice people and places, but I got tired of all the travel. I retired with two years left on my contract. People thought I was crazy, but I didn't want to miss my kids' high school sports.

I never wanted to be an agent. The game there is recruiting clients, not unlike the work I currently do at Barclay Damon, but recruiting college kids is not my idea of fun.

Having written nearly 40 books in your life, what first made you want to become an author? With a number of those books being written for children, what are some of the things you've helped to do to advance the cause of childhood literacy?

I loved reading from an early age. Books were magic to me, and I wanted to make magic. My ideas come from my own experiences and my imagination.

Reading is weightlifting for your brain. Kids who read perform better in every subject. I've spoken to kids at over 1,500 schools across the country and I used every dollar of my speaking fees to buy books for underprivileged kids, schools and libraries.

When were you first diagnosed with ALS, and how has it had an impact on your life both personally and professionally?

I was diagnosed in 2016. The challenges have been significant and reminiscent of life in the NFL where the pain was never-ending. ALS isn't as painful, but the inability to walk, eat, talk and breathe on my own remind me of being in a state that few people experience. The secret is to take one day at a time and enjoy the blessings of that day. Even though I have the limitations that go with ALS, I feel blessed every day to have the family and friends that I have, the ability to work and write, the beautiful place we live, and the greatest country in the world.

Most of my communications are through email now. To do this, and to write, I've had to learn to type with my eyes which was a challenge at first, but it is quite easy and natural to me now.

What are your goals going into the rest of 2021?

I'd like to finish the book I'm working on and complete another and I'd like to beat my numbers from 2020 at the firm. I also hope to raise another million dollars for TackleALS, a charity I helped found which donates every dollar to the Massachusetts General Hospital's ALS research center. On a personal level, I'd also like to maintain what strength I have left.

What's one piece of advice you would give people dealing with adversity?

Try to focus on the things you have rather than those you don't. If that doesn't help, put things in perspective by considering other people's plights that are even tougher than yours.

--Editing by Alyssa Miller.

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