

**Kirt Jacobs:** Welcome to MoxieTalk with Kirt Jacobs. This is an archived edition when our program was called Leadership Landscape TV.

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**Kirt Jacobs:** Welcome to a new partnership between Metro T.V. and Y-Pal, the Young Professionals Association of Louisville called Leadership Landscape where we go inside the minds of local community leaders and allow them a chance to offer some keen insights into how they see themselves and most importantly explore just what makes them tick. I'm Kirt Jacobs a Y-PAL board member and host of Leadership Landscape. Today our guest is J. Bruce Miller. For those of you who don't know our guest allow me to read some of his bio.

J. Bruce Miller a native Louisvillian is a local attorney and senior partner of the JBM Law Group. He's no stranger to local and statewide political campaigns. He graduated Vanderbilt University with a B.A. and was cum laude with honors in political science and economics in 1962. His senior thesis for the Honors Program, which is a little bit telling I would say, is The Changing Character of American Political Campaigns. In 1965, he graduated cum laude from the University, excuse me, from the Vanderbilt University School of Law That same year of 1965 J. Bruce Miller was admitted to the Louisville, Kentucky, and American Bar Associations. Prior to forming JBM Law Group in 1992 to present as a senior partner.

J. Bruce Miller has many notable achievements. In 1966 he served on Gov. Ned Breathitt's task force of young Kentuckians. In 1969 J. Bruce Miller was elected Jefferson County Attorney and subsequently in 1973, 1977, and 1981 he was reelected Jefferson County attorney. From 1972 to present he has an A rating in the Martin Dale Hubbell from 1976-83 was legal counsel for the Kentucky Democratic Party. And the list goes on we've only just begun, in 1979 he co-chaired John Y. Brown's campaign for governor. In 1980 he served on John Y Brown's governor's arena task force, which is rather timely in this

day, and age. In 1983-1985 he was on the Board of Governors for the Continental Basketball Association. In 1987 he co-chaired John Y Brown's second attempt for governor. From 1986-1990 on the board of directors of the Kentucky Athletic Hall of Fame. In 1991 he chaired Fred Cowan's lieutenant governor bid and campaign, From 1982 to present he is in the Who's Who in American Law from 1988 to present board of directors level Sports Commission and some of J. Bruce Miller's notable clients have been Warner Brothers Pictures in California, Columbia Pictures, Orion Pictures distribution of California, local notable clients he has served are the old City of Louisville, obviously prior to merger, the Kentucky Racing Commission, LG&E Energy Corporation, Thorntons oil and PATCO.

In October 2004, which we have a copy here,. J. Bruce Miller published Airball, the Complete and Unvarnished account of Louisville's 30 year odyssey to acquire an NBA franchise. And it is an interesting read. J. Bruce Miller resides in Louisville with his wife Norma and his three children named Jamie, Alexis, and Sarah, three stepchildren named Gavin, Carter, and Mitch as well as four grandchildren named Anna, Tristen, Carson, and Adelea. Did I get that right?

**J. Bruce Miller:** Adelea.

**Kirt Jacobs:** Sorry. With that J Bruce with that impressive background of political history.

**J. Bruce Miller:** Well I don't know how impressive it is but that's what happened.

**Kirt Jacobs:** We'll see. What drives you?

**J. Bruce Miller:** Well I think I've always been driven by the pursuit of excellence. I don't know that you ever attain it. And whether it was playing golf as a kid, which I got quite serious about it, whether it was my education or the practical law or my family or whatever I've been involved in. I was taught to believe that if you're going to do something might as well do it right and as nearly right as you can and that's been what's driven me for now 65 years and I

learned that from my father.

**Kirt Jacobs:** Whom do you credit most influential in your life J. Bruce?

**J. Bruce Miller:** Well it was the old man.

**Kirt Jacobs:** Was it?

**J. Bruce Miller:** Yeah without a doubt. I thought about that some over the course of the last half dozen years because as you get a little older and you begin wondering how long you're going to be around and you kind of wonder who was most influential. And my dad was... I described him one time as the kind of individual who was like Bobby Knight. You knew it it was black and white. He was either right or wrong, good or bad. There wasn't a gray in my dad's existence. And he was, he taught me an awful lot of the lessons that I have over the course of time and they were to teach my own children in by and large they were all right and all good. It makes it a lot simpler in life if you don't have to, if you don't tell a lie. Then you don't have to remember the lie you told when you get ready to tell one to somebody else. And when I was in politics it was the easiest job in the world because if you never tell one you don't have to worry about it. And so I was always pretty straight straightforward about those things might not have made me a very good politician but I slept at night. So my father was the without a doubt the most influential person in my life.

**Kirt Jacobs:** Yes in terms of moments what was the most defining moment of your life?

**J. Bruce Miller:** I don't know that there was a moment but there was certainly a period of time I was a product of the local public school system around here and I was going to be a golf professional and I had a golf scholarship to Florida State as a kid and they were one of the premier golf schools and again my father interjected and decided I wasn't going to Florida State. I was going to go to Vanderbilt. And at the time I thought he was crazy cause I could play golf pretty good. I just got finished beating Frankie Beard who wound up in a

tournament around here wound up being on the pro tour four-five years later. But you know dad called the shots and turn out to be right. Because that seven years I spent down there at Vanderbilt, while I went in as a child and a kid and a jock of sorts basketball and golf I came out understanding the importance of education. Understanding man it's brutal down there. You never, you have plenty of fun at Vanderbilt but there was never a day that goes by that you don't remember what you're there for. Because if you forget what you're there for you ain't going to last very long. So that was probably the most defining moment in my life that that experience down there. Taught me the importance of education.

**Kirt Jacobs:** Let me ask you this question which brings some interesting responses to our guest, If there is one thing J. Bruce what is your biggest professional regret? In other words, if there looking back, armchair quarterback your life, anything you do differently?

**J. Bruce Miller:** Well I don't have a lot of regrets. You can't live a life looking back on regrets. From a professional standpoint if by that you mean the practice of law. I don't have any regrets at all because I think we've been pretty successful. We've done a lot of legal work for a lot of major corporations around the country. The one regret I would have from my non-professional standpoint is probably not running for county judge in 1981. I had been county attorney for three terms and. Mitch McConnell was the standing county judge and he ran again. I chose not to run the party wanted me too. I chose not too and to run for county attorney. Pop Malone, the county clerk, ran and I think Mitch beat him by about 500 votes or something. It wasn't much. And that probably is somewhat of a regret because I think I could have beaten Mitch. Probably would have. What it would have meant or what it would have ever happened I don't have any idea.

**Kirt Jacobs:** What it would have lead too.

**J. Bruce Miller:** If you want to start playing if games that's a dangerous thing to do. Since then I've turned into pretty good friend, Mitch is one of the best friends. So it's you know, I guess he would've still been if we'd run against each other but so if I have a

regret from nonprofessional standpoint that would be one..

**Kirt Jacobs:** On the flipside of that J. Bruce, what is your biggest professional triumph?

**J. Bruce Miller:** Well from a professional standpoint if you're speaking about the price of law, I think it's creating, doing the kind of legal work, most of what we do or corporate litigate is corporate litigation around the country. And we our firm is kind of a big secret. We don't advertise on buses or anything but we have cases all over the United States. Being successful in that venue among your peers where major corporate counsel for corporations of major major corporations would would learn of you and hire you to assist them or to represent them is really, I can't that anyone in particular but there are a number of them together is I think a significant professional accomplishment.

**Kirt Jacobs:** What do you find exciting about all this from the law and the politics?

**J. Bruce Miller:** Action. I've never been I'm a great contemplate or I love to contemplate. But you know I've done a lot of that in my lifetime but I've also done an awful lot of also I'm also pretty action oriented that you don't get you don't get very far just sitting around thinking about stuff. You've got to go do it. And that's sort of the thing that I would I would answer that question.

**Kirt Jacobs:** OK. What's your favorite word J.Bruce?

**J. Bruce Miller:** word?

**Kirt Jacobs:** In the great lexicon in the English language. If you have one.

**J. Bruce Miller:** Well I think. I've I've always I guess it would be the word I just used. Action. Because because it's been such a part of my life. I've never been able to sit still very much I'm sort of act impetuous in that in the sense of keeping moving all the time. I

remember years ago we were we had a T.V. in the basement I was doing well I would watch T.V. but I couldn't just watch the T.V. I had to make a model train. So in the other room in the basement is a great big model train where I made all kinds of little houses and stuff. Simply because I couldn't sit still long enough just to sit and watch. I had to be doing something else too so it's. Was not a lot of dead time around me.

**Kirt Jacobs:** I got you, I can tell by your history or your bio it took a good chunk to read there. In terms of leadership, you had to pick one word for it out of the lexicon of English language if you can in terms of leadership. What would that word be for you?

**J. Bruce Miller:** Well the easiest word would be would be the concept of leadership is the concept concept of vision. But it's that is of itself isn't enough. It has to be turned into action. A person has a vision. If they dream of something and then write a book about it but that doesn't necessarily cause something to happen. There's got to be, there's got to be the concomitant action in and I think those two those two those two words both symbolize

**Kirt Jacobs:** Vision and action

**J. Bruce Miller:** My view vision in action with that one without the other is worthless either one without the other is worthless if you haven't had any vision.

**Kirt Jacobs:** Kind of a cause and effect if you will.

**J. Bruce Miller:** You're just you're just you know you're just a firing at the sky. So you got to have them both and they got to interact.

**Kirt Jacobs:** This is a question to bring some discomfort to some of our guests, when the great day comes J Bruce, how do you want to be remembered?

**J. Bruce Miller:** Well who said that would be a great day. I assume you mean when I croak...

**Kirt Jacobs:** That's the nice spin we try to put on it J Bruce

**J. Bruce Miller:** I guess some people would look forward to that day I don't know I could probably name a few. I think I would if I had my opportunity to do is to design what the way I'd like to be remembered it would be that I was blatantly honest. To a fault. A lot of people. I haven't been very politically correct in my life but I have as I said earlier I've always been able to call the shots. I call them. And that's that and I move on and people know me that way you know of me that way and I think it's. My life they've known of me that way and I think it if I could be remembered by that. Symbol. I would be satisfied.

**Kirt Jacobs:** That's it's a great answer because knowing what I've read in that book blatant honestest pretty much covers it.

**J. Bruce Miller:** It makes things much more simple. I don't know that that book airball is not. It's honest I mean it's totally true but the fact the matter is we don't do much self-analysis around here. We really have a tendency to kind of puff our you can act like we're something other than what we are and hopefully that book will help us realize we've got a long way to go if we really feel like we're competing with other cities. That we sort of fashion ourselves as competing with. We are in the middle of the herd.

**Kirt Jacobs:** It's a good read for anyone that desires to read it. Thank you J Bruce for being on Y-PAL's Leadership Landscape.

**J. Bruce Miller:** Thank you for having me.

**Kirt Jacobs:** And thank you very much for joining us today on Leadership Landscape. Until next time, I'm Kirt Jacobs. Thank you J. Bruce.

**J. Bruce Miller:** My pleasure.

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**Kirt Jacobs:** Thank you for listening to MoxieTalk with Kirt Jacobs.

This episode was archival audio from when we were known as Leadership Landscape TV. If you have any feedback, general comments, or a recommendation for a suitable guest feel free to email me at [kirt@moxietalk.com](mailto:kirt@moxietalk.com) or catch us on Facebook under MoxieTalk with Kirt Jacobs, or on Twitter under [@kirtjacobs](https://twitter.com/kirtjacobs) or our extensive website at [www.moxietalk.com](http://www.moxietalk.com)