

# THE YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS

Real estate lawyer Gina Burgin once went coast-to-coast on *Weekend Today*

It's 9 o'clock on a Friday night, and Gina Burgin is:

- representing her firm, Richmond-based Hirschler Fleischer, at a lavish legal gala
- enjoying a candlelit light dinner with her husband, Victor Shavers
- sound asleep
- none of the above

The answer is d). Burgin is on the phone with a reporter because this is the only time she can squeeze an interview into her schedule.

Burgin's high-powered career at Hirschler Fleischer is only part of what makes her days so frenzied. Another component is her three children, who range in age from 3 to 10. And the capper is her husband's job as a consultant for IBM, which takes him each day to Washington, D.C., 90 miles from their Richmond home. So on this Friday night, while Victor is commuting, she's juggling the needs of their three children ... and the interview.

"Most people would think our routine is hectic," she says, "but I really don't." This ability to remain calm amid the storm has helped propel the 40-year-old Burgin to the top of her profession. A partner at Hirschler Fleischer, she has made her mark specializing in commercial real estate law.

"I do anything and everything that deals with dirt," she says with a laugh. "I do acquisitions, I do dispositions — which is a fancy way of saying buying and selling property." But Burgin is quick to point out that her work extends beyond real estate. "My practice is just as much general business law as it is real estate," she says.

People have taken notice. *Virginia Business Magazine* named her a member of Virginia's "Legal Elite."

"Frankly, with the number of attorneys there are in Virginia, it's nice to know that folks even know I exist," she says. "It's even more gratifying to know they respect what I do."

But her accomplishments as an attorney are only part of her story. There is also Gina Burgin the journalist. She was a communications

major at George Washington University, and after graduating she worked as a news desk assistant at ABC. But the entry-level position stifled both her intellect and her ambitions.

"I really was a bit restless," Burgin says. "I wanted to move up the food chain quicker than the food chain really allows you to move. ... The things I was doing with my college degree didn't quite agree with me — like fetching sandwiches, pulling wires and other things that my 10-year-old could be doing. My desk director actually recommended that I look at law schools."

Burgin did just that and wound up earning her law degree from the Catholic University of America. Still, she never quite got journalism out of her system. So when NBC conducted a nationwide search for two guest hosts for the Oct. 2, 2004, edition of *Weekend Today*, Burgin decided to reconnect with her journalistic roots. Lo and behold, she landed the gig. It wasn't long before she was off to New York to rub elbows with *Weekend Today* co-hosts Campbell Brown and Lester Holt, among other network bigwigs.

"Meeting Campbell was interesting because she started her career down here in Richmond," says Burgin. "That was an interesting coincidence. And I thought Lester Holt was an extremely impressive guy. Very professional. He's pretty much the same off camera as on camera."

The experience, Burgin says, was exhilarating. "It was a thrill. I actually thought, 'Hey, I can do this, too.' My partners [at Hirschler Fleischer] tease

me all the time. It was the talk of the office, the town."

Will she return to the small screen soon? Hard to believe, given her schedule, but Burgin is still restless.

"I don't know what shape it will take, but certainly some of the tools I have will assist me in doing ... something more meaningful. The specific expertise in real estate and business, the ability to connect with a number of different types of people, and the broadcasting part: I think it will all come together. So let's just see what happens."

— William Wagner



**Left: With Oliver W. Hill, co-counsel for *Brown v. Board of Education*. Below: As a guest host of *Weekend Today*, with Lester Holt.**

