

## TURNING MY LOVE OF SPORTS INTO A PAYCHECK



One thing many people don't know about me is that **I'm a professional sports statistician**. This year marks my 21st season working NFL games, my 4th season with Major League Baseball, and I also keep stats for football and basketball at the University of South Florida. For more than two decades, I've had the privilege of being courtside, in the press box, or up in the booth tracking every play and making sure the official numbers of the game are accurate.

Over the years, this "side hobby" has given me the chance to be part of some pretty incredible moments. I've worked two Super Bowls, four Pro Bowls, and just last year I was courtside at the NCAA Women's Final Four. Each of those events had its own unique energy, but they all carried that sense of history being made right in front of me—and I got to help document it. **Those are experiences I'll never forget.**

**Although I do get paid, the truth is, I don't really do it for the money.**

What keeps me coming back year after year is the energy, the atmosphere, and the love of the game. There's nothing quite like standing in an NFL stadium packed with fans, hearing the roar after a big play, or sitting behind home plate as the crack of the bat echoes on a summer night. It's an adrenaline rush that never gets old.

What makes this even more meaningful is that, while many people spend a lot of money on hobbies—like golfing, boating, or collecting—I **actually get paid to do mine**. It's the best of both worlds: I'm doing something I would gladly do for free, but instead, it puts a little money in my pocket. In fact, this hobby has paid for itself many times over, proving that sometimes the things you're most passionate about can create unexpected opportunities.

For me, sports statistics combines two of my lifelong interests: numbers and athletics. I've always loved working with data and details, and in this role I get to apply that passion in a fast-paced, high-stakes environment. Every game is different, every situation unique, and the challenge of getting it right in real time keeps me sharp.

**In the end, this work has given me more than just a paycheck.** It's given me memories, friendships, and a chance to be part of something bigger than myself. Whether it's the NFL, MLB, or college sports, I've been lucky enough to turn my love of sports into a rewarding side career—and that's something I'll always be grateful for.

**-Don Golden**

# Meet the Team

## Eric Barksdale



At The Golden Law Group, our strength lies in our people. This month, we spotlight **Eric Barksdale, an associate attorney with over 30 years of legal experience** and a deep commitment to helping clients.

**Experience You Can Trust:** Eric has been with us for over two years, focusing mainly on Chapter 13 cases while also handling Chapter 7 and adversary proceedings. He's there for clients every step of the way—from their first consultation to hearings and post-confirmation matters—making sure they feel supported and informed throughout the process.

After graduating from the University of Florida Law School in 1990, Eric began his career as a prosecutor before shifting into bankruptcy law. For 24 years, he served as staff attorney for the Chapter 13 Trustee in Tampa, helping manage an incredible caseload during the bankruptcy boom of the early 2000s. He later ran his own practice, representing individuals, businesses, and

creditors, which gave him a **well-rounded perspective on all sides of bankruptcy proceedings.**

**What Drives Him:** Eric says the best part of his work is the relief clients feel after filing: *"Before the case, they have high anxiety, and after, they feel so much better."* He's dedicated to carefully reviewing every case and guiding clients through the process with clarity and compassion, always aiming to lift the weight off their shoulders.

**Life Outside the Office:** A lifelong Floridian, Eric enjoys traveling with his wife to Flagler Beach, cheering on the Florida Gators, and listening to southern rock. He and his wife recently adopted a five-year-old King Charles Cavalier rescue who's quickly become part of the family. His down-to-earth nature and love for community reflect the same values he brings into his practice every day.

We're grateful for Eric's expertise, warmth, and dedication—and proud to have him on our team!

## Hear From Our Clients



I have worked with them side by side and **what a team!** Not only open and great communication, you work with humans and not corporate robot lawyers, they feel for you, they explain, they don't make something look better than it is, mostly worked with Susan, Elizabeth and Eric but honestly the team is a 10 out of 10! **So good other members of my family are now working with them.**

**-Melissa Ann**

## One-Pan Harvest Chicken & Veggies

*Inspired by [emeals.com](http://emeals.com).*

**Cost per serving: ~\$2.50 | Serves: 4 | Time: 40 minutes**

A sheet pan dinner with September produce—sweet potatoes, apples, and Brussels sprouts roast with juicy chicken thighs for a balanced, budget-friendly meal.

### INGREDIENTS:

- 4 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs
- 2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 2 apples, cored and sliced
- 1 red onion, cut into wedges
- 1 tbsp maple syrup (or honey)
- 1 tsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 cup Brussels sprouts, halved (or green beans if more affordable)
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp dried thyme (or rosemary)
- Salt & pepper to taste

### DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Whisk olive oil, Dijon, maple syrup, vinegar, thyme, salt, and pepper. Arrange chicken, sweet potatoes, apples, onion, and Brussels sprouts on a sheet pan; drizzle with sauce and toss. Roast 35–40 minutes, flipping veggies halfway, until chicken is cooked through and veggies are golden. Serve warm.

# Build an Emergency Fund

## The Golden Rules Of Financial Freedom

### The Emergency Fund: Your Best Protection Against Debt

Getting out of debt is a huge milestone. But here's the reality: without a safety net, one unexpected expense — a car repair, a medical bill, or even a broken A/C — can push you right back into debt. That's why the *next step* toward lasting financial freedom is building an emergency fund.

#### What's an Emergency Fund?

It's money set aside only for life's true emergencies — job loss, urgent repairs, or medical needs. Not vacations, not shopping. Just protection.

#### How Much Do You Need?

- **Starter fund:** \$1,000 to cover small emergencies.
- **Full fund:** 3–6 months of living expenses (more if your income is irregular).

#### Where Should It Go?

Keep it **safe, separate, and accessible** — like in a high-yield savings account that's not tied to your daily spending.



#### Why It Matters

Your emergency fund is more than cash. It's peace of mind. It keeps you from swiping a credit card when life throws you a curveball — and ensures your debt-free status sticks.

💡 **Quick Tip:** Automate it. Set up a transfer every payday (even \$50 adds up) so your emergency fund grows without you thinking about it.

**The Golden Rule:** Getting out of debt gives you a fresh start. Building an emergency fund makes sure you keep it.

**I'm Don Golden, a bankruptcy lawyer on a mission to help people get out of debt and build wealth, one Golden Rule at a time.**

## THANK YOU! For Your Referrals

We're incredibly grateful to our clients and referral partners who continue to trust us and spread the word.

#### Last month, we received 17 referrals —

- 12 from clients
- 5 from other attorneys

*Your support helps us reach and assist more people who need guidance and relief. Thank you for being part of our mission!*



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Get answers, support, and a personalized plan. No pressure, no obligation.

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## WEALTH OF WISDOM



*By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail*

— Benjamin Franklin