

BABY, YOU CAN DRIVE HIS CAR

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If you're a music lover, stop for a moment and compare yourself to Tampa attorney Mark Bentley. From the moment you enter or call his office, you can tell he's no ordinary fan. Memorabilia decorates the waiting room, and he found a way to hook up his iPod to the phone system so his favorite band is playing at all times on hold.

Songs you might hear: "All You Need is Love," "Drive My Car," or Bentley's favorite, "In My Life."

If you guessed he's a Beatles fan, congratulations! We have no prizes for you, other than to know a little more about this attorney and his most loved band.

A graduate of the University of Florida and Stetson University College of Law, Bentley's resume reads like many others' in Tampa Bay: school, degrees, passed the bar, community work and active in organizations, not to make it sound easy or anything.

But after seeing Bentley's last Christmas party invitation (fashioned like a Beatles holiday single), and reading the [recent news about Abbey Road Studios](#) in London (where of course he's visited), I decided to find out more about Bentley's off-the-clock interest.



Christmas party invitation

"Watching them on the 'Ed Sullivan Show' in February 1964 really got me hooked and inspired me to change from clarinet to guitar, and I now have 12 guitars," he said.

Those 12 guitars belong to his vast collection of memorabilia valued at almost \$150,000. Given the current market, he has seen a decrease in value of some items.

"At this time, like everything else, it's a good time to buy and not sell," Bentley said. "Some of my items are one-of-a-kind and should increase in value."

But, he notes, he's not in it for the value. "I simply enjoy collecting; and people who have seen my collection comment on what great memories it brings back."

He recently put it on display at the aforementioned 2009 Christmas party.

One thought: to open a bar, restaurant or gallery where he could collect, display and sell memorabilia, "like a scaled-down Hard Rock Cafe, with a Beatles theme."

At times, Bentley thinks his own personal Beatlemania may have put him in a "different light" with some clients and associates, but not in a detrimental way.



Courtesy of Mark Bentley
Bentley on Abbey Road

"Some new clients will tell me that they were referred by a client or acquaintance because I was considered a good lawyer, and mentioned that I have an awesome Beatles memorabilia collection," he said.

And for those who want to do business with Bentley, pay attention. No one's used "mentioning The Beatles" as a way to get their foot in the door with him — not yet.

Points of entry

- Favorite album: "Yesterday and Today" (also known as the 'Butcher Album' that was recalled by Capitol Records, he said, because of the controversy it caused in the United States as it had mutilated baby dolls and raw meat placed on them on the cover).
- Favorite Beatle: "Tough question. Paul because of his diversity — he plays all instruments, and his melodic, complex bass playing, which seems to be a lost art form in today's music."
- Other hobbies: Photography, mountain biking, golf