

Translated article – “Pascal Chadenet à la tête de Dentons en toute sérénité”, *Les Echos*, Friday February 21, 2014

Pascal Chadenet, leading Dentons in serenity

“There are more important values than success,” according to Pascal Chadenet, when we spoke of his nomination to the position of co-manager of the Dentons Paris office several weeks ago. Pascal (57), who joined the 50 office firm in 2000, takes up his new functions with the retrospective distance that he imposes in all matters.

This seasoned traveller arrived at practicing law through a convoluted pathway. His first diploma was in philosophy, and he then added a second master’s degree in mathematics in 1979—studies which taught him “to count and to do so with serenity”.

Armed with his degrees, Pascal Chadenet—who to this day deplores that curiosity is not an established value —spent nearly a decade abroad.

From itinerancy to residency, starting in 1981 as a math teacher at the Los Angeles French high school, teaching children of well-known French personalities - Halliday, Aznavour and Rousso, before teaching philosophy at the Compiègne University of Technology. Between these two jobs, the young teacher took an eight month break in Asia, backpacking. He spent half of his stay in China, whose borders had only been open for six months. He did not speak Mandarin but learned the basics by heart—starting with the names of dishes that make up its cuisine, which he loves. Yet primarily he felt the amazing energy from this country, which had been closed for decades, and he returned to France convinced that he had seen the birth of the future main world power.

Only one of the three books he wrote in the 18 months following his return was published: *Mariage sous arsenic* ou *L’affaire Lafarge* (*Marriage Under Arsenic*, or *The Lafarge Affaire*) published by Rocher. Throughout the chapters, he tells of an unsolved XIXth century criminal affair. Was it his first experience with the law? “No, just a light novel inspired by a legal affair, pretending to be an author,” corrects the father of three children. However, he remembers that the personal wealth from this “bohemian” period, as he calls it, is inversely proportional to his finances. In his opinion, teaching requires colossal work, which is poorly remunerated in the end, and he makes it a point of honor not to forget this.

Towards Washington

Philosophy led him to written works and on to law. A science for which he devoured textbooks, and earned his B.A. at the university Paris I in 1987. One year later, he completed his LLM at Georgetown University. Amongst innumerable cities visited, Washington remains closest to his heart. For him, it is a place of futility, an agora of law and politics and the center of all federal and international institutions. He gained experience as a lawyer at Wilkie Farr & Gallaher in Paris, where he practiced for 11 years before joining Dentons. The firm, then called Salans, won over this globetrotter, with its pioneer arrival in Eastern Europe, a new territory to explore. Today, in his Parisian office, the voyager has found his home port. Now co-manager, this man with a sparkle in his eye, speaks of the 250 lawyers in the Paris office as friends. He is a lawyer by passion and will remain so as long as possible, “until a heart attack, like most lawyers,” he remarks, amused as always.

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