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# Letter from the Publisher



Meet our 2020 class of legal Icons. This annual Missouri Lawyers Media celebration honors career achievement by recognizing lawyers for their exceptional and lengthy contributions to the profession and community — those who personify the ideals of what it means to be an attorney.

Clearly, we’ve succeeded for the third year in identifying Missouri’s legal icons. Read the profiles of the 26 attorneys featured on these pages, and you will agree. After all, to even be considered for this honor, nominees must be an integral part of their businesses and routinely have made a positive impact on their communities.

And they must have reached at least the age of 60. It’s not about age, per se. After all, six decades of living doesn’t ensure accolades. Six decades of consistent remarkable contribution, however, does ensure icon status.

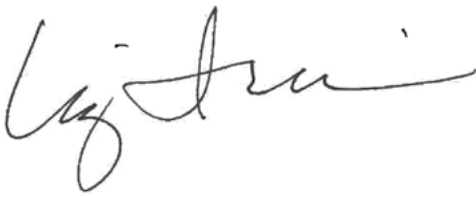
These men and women aspire to a higher call, leading the way for others. The journey of each may be different, but the destination is the same

— measured, thoughtful success. They are paragons in the industry who recognize the need to participate and improve their communities, however they define them.

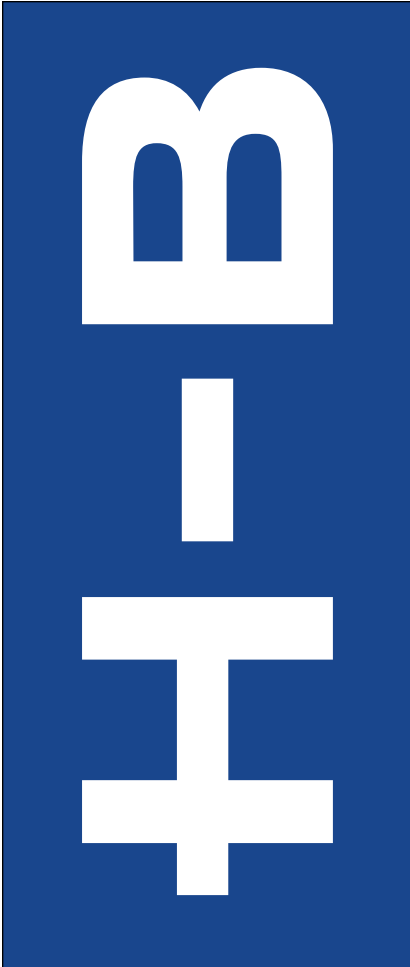
History will continue to catalog the achievements of those we honor through the ICON Awards. But it is their work so far that we highlight through this recognition.

They set a high standard of accomplishment. Icons tend to do that.

So we thank them — for what they’ve done, what they do and what they will do.



Liz Irwin  
Publisher, Missouri Lawyers Media



Maurice Watson

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At Husch Blackwell, we celebrate broad perspectives and believe the talent and knowledge of our people move clients forward. We proudly congratulate Maurice Watson, Husch Blackwell’s Chairman from 2012 to 2018, and all *Missouri Lawyers Media* 2020 ICON Award honorees for their sustained leadership both within and beyond the legal field.

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## Anthony R. Behr



Behr, McCarter & Potter

In some respects, it's almost like everything in life is a math problem," says Anthony Behr. "You just have to figure out the formula and the variables."

This is perhaps not how most lawyers approach life or the law, but it makes perfect sense for Behr, co-founder of the St. Louis firm Behr, McCarter & Potter. He earned a degree in civil engineering from Vanderbilt University in 1976 and, once out of school, was happily building bridges. But he also felt he should get as much education as he could, and he ultimately decided that a law degree was the best fit.

"I probably look at a lot of problems in the law a little more analytically and a little differently than many people with other backgrounds," he said.

After earning his law degree from Saint Louis University in 1980, Behr practiced with Suelthaus & Kaplan, a predecessor to today's Polsinelli. In 1992, he and colleague Dudley McCarter left to start their own firm.

"We decided we'd take a chance because we wanted to practice law the way we wanted to practice law," Behr said.

Behr's practice ranges from insurance defense to legal malpractice defense to commercial litigation. He is a winner of the 1990 Lon O. Hocker Memorial Trial Lawyer Award. Early in his career, he said, an older attorney advised him, "There's litigators, and then there's trial lawyers."

"I've always tried to be a trial lawyer, and I think I've done that," he said.

Increasingly, that's hard to do. Behr estimates he had tried 35 to 40 jury trials at the time he earned the Hocker award, an unheard-of number in today's settlement-happy world. During his career, he's watched lawsuits shift from being a matter of justice and principle to one of risk and

cost analysis.

"You feel, 'I should try this case. I can win this case. I should win this case,'" he said. "And in your heart you know you're ultimately going to settle it. It's tough."

Behr served from 1992 to 1998 as an attorney member of the 21st Circuit Judicial Commission, which he called "one of the best things I've ever done, inside or outside the law." During his term, Behr helped to select finalists for 15 circuit and associate circuit judicial vacancies in St. Louis County, resulting in the appointment of six female judges and four black judges — including Judge George W. Draper III, now chief justice of the Missouri Supreme Court, who began as an associate circuit judge in 1994.

"We chose a really good cross-section of St. Louis County," he said. "I'm very proud of the people we put on."

It was a massive time commitment for an attorney working to build his own firm.

"If there were 50 lawyers who applied, I gave each one of them at least an hour to talk to me, whether or not I thought one minute into it that they didn't have a chance," he said.

One method he used to winnow the field was to ask candidates who in the courtroom is most important — the judge, the jury or the litigant?

"All of them that say the judge, I would pretty much say they're out," he said. "I didn't want someone who in their mind thought they were going into a room and they were the most important person, because they're not. A jury trial is for the litigants, and everybody else plays a little bit different role."

— Scott Lauck

**"I've always tried to be a trial lawyer, and I think I've done that."**

## Martha C. Brown



Martha C. Brown & Associates

Martha C. Brown has seen a lot of change in the elder law practice during her nearly four-decade career. For one thing, her practice now has a name.

"I didn't know I was doing elder law when I was doing it," she said.

Brown began her legal career with a bit of "wandering," she said. After graduating from the University of Vermont, she worked for a legal services agency in Topeka, Kansas, as a paralegal. The lawyers there encouraged her to try law school. She enrolled at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, and though she said she felt a bit out of place among "people with strong personalities that had a plan," she earned her law degree in 1981.

Brown returned to St. Louis, where she grew up, and joined the firm of Gunn & Gunn. Her practice included probate, trust and estate, and guardianship issues, and increasingly she found herself counseling clients on the intricacies of Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security law. It wasn't easy.

"I got involved in these areas of law I knew nothing about," she said. "At the time, there wasn't a lot of information out there. You had to read the federal statutes"

It turned out that there were others out there in her position, which she discovered through the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys. She would go on to help found a Missouri chapter of the group in 1998. Those groups helped her and similar attorneys to put together resources where the federal rules and guidelines change frequently.

"It's not an area of law for people who dabble," she said.

Unlike many practices, elder law usually doesn't involve a discrete problem requiring a legal solution. Instead, it often involves a range of interrelated issues that can stretch well into the future.

"As you do elder law, it kind of morphs into special-needs law," Brown said.

For example, she described a case she had some 20 years ago involving a woman who was the sole shareholder of a closely held corporation that had a few hundred employees.

"A lot of estate planning had been done to minimize taxes," Brown said. "But nobody had really thought through what they were going to do if mom developed dementia."

When that happened, the woman became incapacitated to the point that she was "going around to neighbors eating out of trash cans," Brown said. The family didn't know what to do. Brown was able to guide them through the crisis, establishing a guardianship that helped craft a life for the woman.

"She was able to have a more meaningful life, and she was no longer eating out of people's trash cans and being somewhat abused by caregivers," Brown said.

Through time, the practice has changed. On one hand, as people live longer they have a greater chance of becoming incapacitated in their later years.

"When I was a child, if somebody lived to be 90 it was just amazing," she said. "Now a lot of people live to be 90."

On the other hand, families these days are more willing than they once were to talk to a lawyer about issues of mental decline.

"There's more acceptance and less of a stigma for people to come in and say they're diagnosed" with dementia, she said. "It used to be kind of a secret."

Having carved out an unplanned practice in an area of law that is heavy on planning, Brown said she's enjoyed it very much.

"I never had a day I didn't want to go to work as an elder law attorney," she said.

— Scott Lauck

**"[Elder law] is not an area of law for people who dabble."**



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SGB is proud to have Tom Strong  
as our founding partner and for him  
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## Gloria Clark Reno



Retired judge, St. Louis County Circuit Court

Prior to her retirement, St. Louis County Circuit Judge Gloria Clark Reno served for seven years as an associate circuit judge and 10 years as a circuit judge — including two years as the circuit’s presiding judge.

Yet perhaps the best lesson she ever had on judicial demeanor and temperament came during her time in private practice, when from 1994 to 2002 she was the municipal judge for the city of Northwoods. As a “night court” judge, she quickly learned that the people who had been ticketed for ordinance infractions didn’t want to be there, and that there was usually an underlying reason why they had failed to repair their fence or remove their weeds.

“I knew early on that they were not going to be at their best, and when people show up in court they have a problem,” Reno said. “Therefore, it’s important for the court, for us, to be at our best.”

Reno didn’t have the bench in mind when she earned her law degree in 1986 from Saint Louis University. She had always simply wanted to be a lawyer — inspired, she said, by her vigorous discussions with her father.

“He said, ‘You need to be a lawyer because you hate to lose an argument,’” she said.

Reno worked as a public defender from 1988 to 1992, then went into private practice, first with the firm Caldwell Hughes & Singleton and later with the firm run by Larry Hale. Reno said it was Hale, who died earlier this year, who encouraged her to become a judge. (Hale, who also is a 2020 ICON Awards honoree, also played a role in the careers of St. Louis County Circuit Judge David L. Vincent III and St. Louis Circuit Judge Calea Stovall-Reid.)

The 21st Circuit Judicial Commission selected Reno as a finalist for an associate circuit vacancy in 2002, and Gov.

Bob Holden named her as the first Black woman to be appointed to the St. Louis County court. She was exposed to a wider range of issues than she had seen in municipal court, including family and criminal dockets. Those duties expanded further in 2009 when Gov. Jay Nixon named her to the circuit bench.

“I enjoyed being a judge. It is a great career,” she said. “It is a great opportunity to serve the citizens here in St. Louis County. I really viewed it as a great honor.”

Then in 2018, her fellow judges chose her as the circuit’s presiding judge, the first Black judge to hold that position in St. Louis County. She served in that capacity until her retirement in 2019.

“Generally speaking, when you are an associate or even a circuit judge, you are really involved in your division, your docket,” she said. “You know basically how the court operates, but it’s not at the kind of level as when you’re the presiding judge and really realize the responsibilities to make sure that the court is functioning properly and that the citizens of St. Louis County are being served.”

Reno also was part of the ongoing effort to better integrate the municipal courts into the wider court system. From her experience, she said, she knew it was important to keep someone with a \$50 parking ticket from spiraling into \$500 of debt because they missed a court date.

It also brought home to her the lessons she began learning during her service in night court a quarter-century before, and that her predecessors have proved about the importance of a diverse bench.

“You always want to make sure you do a good job so that you leave the door open for others to follow,” she said. “You want to make sure that you do the very best job that you can with whatever job you’re given.”

— Scott Lauck

**“You want to make sure that you do the very best job that you can with whatever job you’re given.”**

## Tim Dollar



Dollar, Burns & Becker

# 275.

In an age when lawyers might try a handful of cases each year if they are lucky, Tim Dollar’s estimated career number of jury trials is staggering.

It’s that kind of experience that has enabled Dollar to handle massive cases in 38 states across the country, ranging from a \$39 million verdict for a deadly crash on an icy Texas road to a \$37.5 million jury verdict for a man paralyzed in a crash on a Kansas City interstate.

And even when his cases end in settlement — as happened, for instance, with the confidential resolution in 2014 for the longtime portrayer of Kansas City Chiefs’ mascot KC Wolf after he was injured on a zipline — Dollar’s trial skills are put to good use. Learning to try cases by trial and error “demystifies” the experience.

“It allows you to see the big picture of a case and how it will unfold, and not through the microcosm of some single testimony or some single deposition from some single witness,” he said. “You can see in your mind’s eye how this case is going to play out in front of a jury.”

Dollar knew from the age of 10 that he wanted to be a civil trial attorney. His father was the pastor of a large Kansas City church, whose lawyer was Max Foust, one of the city’s premier plaintiffs’ lawyers. Yet after earning his law degree from the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law in 1984, he went to work at the Jackson County Prosecutor’s Office.

“I wanted as much trial experience as I could as early in my career as I could,” he said. “I think that was a rock-solid foundation for what I was ultimately fortunate enough to be able to do.”

After two years and 60 jury trials, including 27 homicide cases, Dollar was ready to move on. But then-Prosecutor Albert Riederer persuaded him to stay on

as a part-time special prosecutor even as he built his civil practice.

“I thought that would last about six months,” Dollar said. “Thirty years and six elected prosecutors later, I’m still doing it.” His cases range from Kansas City’s “Precious Doe” case to the ongoing prosecution of David Jungerman, a businessman accused of killing a local trial attorney who won a sizeable verdict against him.

Dollar is a former member of the 16th Circuit Judicial Commission, which selects judicial candidates for the Jackson County Circuit Court under the Nonpartisan Court Plan. His six-year term bridged Republican and Democratic governors, as well as the Missouri Supreme Court’s decision in 2010 to require the commission’s interviews with applications to be open to the public.

Between 2006 and 2011, Dollar helped select panels for nine local judgeships — including, in 2011, the one that went to Judge James Kanatzar, who was then the county prosecutor and thus Dollar’s effective supervisor. (Citing that conflict, Dollar recused himself from that vote.)

Dollar played a much more direct role in the career of Chris Koster, a litigator at his firm who also served as Cass County Prosecutor, a state senator, attorney general and, in 2016, as the Democratic candidate for governor.

“We had some exhilarating times together,” Dollar said. “I was involved in every one of his campaigns. It was great to watch — and terribly expensive.”

Dollar said his father also was the source of his interest in politics, as his church mission brought him in contact with everyone from local leaders to U.S. Sen Tom Eagleton. Dollar said he considered a run for an eastern Jackson County House seat before deciding against it.

“I decided I liked the behind-the-scenes side of politics rather than the front and center,” he said. “Nobody cares where I go to dinner.”

— Scott Lauck

**“I wanted as much trial experience as I could as early in my career as I could.”**



## Edward L. Dowd Jr.



Dowd Bennett

Every organization I've ever worked with, I've ended up being a leader of it," Ed Dowd says. "I like to get things done, and I like to help people that really need help."

There are, of course, the obvious ones: U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Missouri. Co-founder of Dowd Bennett, one of St. Louis' most prominent law firms. President of The Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis from 2017 to 2018.

Then there are the lower-profile but highly meaningful roles: president of the St. Louis Regional Crime Commission, a private nonprofit organization that aids victims of crime. His work with BackStoppers, which supports the families of police officers and other emergency responders killed in the line of duty, and CrimeStoppers, which offers confidential rewards for those who offer information to help solve crimes. His co-founding of St. Louis Bank in 2005.

Dowd said his approach stems from the example of his father, Edward Dowd Sr., who among many roles diversified the St. Louis Circuit Attorney's Office in the 1950s with the hiring of its first four Black prosecutors.

"I really learned from him how important it was to help people, particular victims of crimes," he said. "He also was always a huge believer in diversity."

Dowd described himself as "probably an odd little boy who, if somebody would ask me what I wanted to be when I grow up, I'd say I wanted to be a prosecutor." He served as the top federal prosecutor in St. Louis from 1993 to 1999. During that time he won on every count in some 30 cases he took to trial, he said.

"I think when it's time to really go after vicious

criminals, I'm very good at that," he said. "But I also know when you should give somebody a pass, when you should give them pretrial diversion and when you should work out something appropriate — drug court, veterans court, whatever is the right thing for that person and society."

Dowd left the U.S. attorney's office to assist former U.S. Sen. Jack Danforth as special counsel in the investigation of the 1993 raid of the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas. After a stint alongside Danforth at what was then Bryan Cave, Dowd, along with law partner Jim Bennett, founded their current firm in 2006,

Dowd Bennett handles high-stakes and complex civil and white collar criminal cases and investigations, ranging from defense of a bank for its predecessor's role in mismanaging a prepaid funeral expense trust, to representing former Gov. Eric Greitens, who faced criminal charges in St. Louis before ultimately resigning in 2018.

"We're very good, I think, at doing the best we possibly can at every case and giving it everything we have," he said. "Doesn't mean we can win every case, but all 33 lawyers at Dowd Bennett — and I mean that, all 33 — give it everything they've got for our clients."

Dowd comes from a long line of police officers, yet he said he also took part in protests earlier this year against police brutality.

"Every policeman that I saw, I said 'Thank you for your service,'" he said. "The vast majority of police officers deserve our respect, and I do greatly appreciate their service."

— Scott Lauck

## "I like to get things done, and I like to help people that really need help."

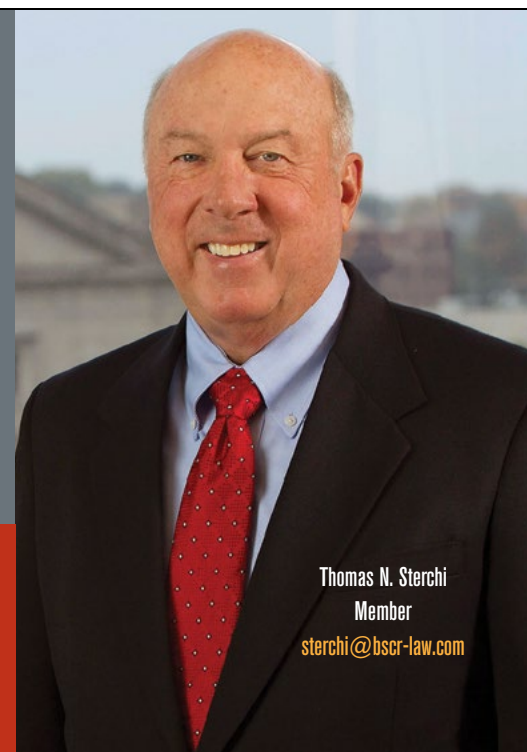
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## Don M. Downing



Gray, Ritter & Graham

At the successful end of one of Don Downing's trials, a massively built farmer came over to give him a hug.

"He had tears in his eyes, streaming down his cheeks, and he gave me the biggest bear hug. It just about broke my back," Downing said. "That, in essence, is what it's all about."

Downing, the managing partner of Gray, Ritter & Graham, has had a career that has spanned the political to the agricultural. His father, Vic Downing, was a Missouri state representative from southeastern Missouri for 20 years, and Downing himself worked on the 1980 U.S. Senate campaign of Tom Eagleton.

After earning his law degree from the University of Missouri in 1982, Downing clerked for U.S. District Judge Edward L. Filippine of the Eastern District of Missouri, then joined the Kansas City firm known now as Stinson. He made partner, but in 1993, he became the chief deputy attorney general under the then-recently elected Attorney General Jay Nixon. It was a good melding of two of his interests.

"Even though I ran the law side of the office, when you're in a position like that you can't help but be immersed in the political side as well," he said.

Among other things, the job took him to the U.S. Supreme Court four times, including a 1994 case that he argued personally involving the constitutionality of a Missouri tax. At the end of his public service, Downing rejoined his prior firm and became the managing partner of Stinson's newly opened office in St. Louis.

"I was in a position to imprint the culture and tradition of the firm into the new office," he said.

He joined Gray, Ritter & Graham in 2004. Among other honors, he is a Fellow of the invitation-only American College of Trial Lawyers, as well as a former member and chairman of the MU Board of Curators.

A native of Kennett in Missouri's Bootheel region, Downing grew up around farmers and has been taking farming-related cases throughout his career, typically involving issues with the large corporations that dominate the agricultural industry.

"I think farmers are salt-of-the-earth people," he said. "They're not litigious by nature, but they do want justice when they've been hurt."

Major cases that Downing has led include a \$750 million settlement in 2011 involving genetically modified rice. He also served as national co-lead counsel in multidistrict litigation involving Switzerland-based Syngenta's genetically modified corn, resulting in a \$217.7 million verdict in the Kansas portion of the case, followed the next year by a \$1.51 billion settlement of the entire suit. And this June, Downing announced a \$400 million settlement for farmers who alleged they suffered crop damage caused by drift from the pesticide dicamba.

Such cases take years to litigate and often involve untested legal issues. For Downing, the thrill of the litigation is a side benefit.

"I enjoy complex litigation. I do," Downing said. "But what really drives me to persevere during these four- or five-year cases and all of the expenses and all of the complexities is what I view as the end result. That's when you're able to send a check out to a farmer that can make a difference in the farmer's life."

— Scott Lauck

**"Farmers are salt-of-the-earth people . . . they do want justice when they've been hurt."**

## J. Kent Emison



Langdon & Emison

When Kent Emison joined Bob Langdon at Langdon & Emison in Lexington, the firm was a typical small-town practice that handled a variety of legal matters.

In the decades that followed, however, Emison helped to launch a high-powered personal injury practice with national reach. He said that path evolved naturally after the firm took on a case in the early 1990s that laid the groundwork: In *Baker v. General Motors*, Emison obtained an \$11.3 million verdict for the families of two people who burned to death in a car after a collision.

The case ultimately rose to the U.S. Supreme Court, which in 1997 ruled unanimously in his clients' favor while also settling whether a Missouri court could order the testimony of a former GM employee who was barred from testifying in another state.

Before *Baker*, Langdon & Emison was a general practice firm, Emison said. That case led the firm to delve into personal injury law.

"It wasn't by design," he said. "Bob Langdon and I were still involved in a small-town practice and never, ever imagined that when we took the case . . . we never wanted nor thought we'd end up where we did, but it was great."

Emison is a lifelong resident of Lafayette County. He grew up in a third-generation dairy-farming family, but he bucked family tradition to become a lawyer. He earned his law degree from the University of Missouri-Kansas City in 1981.

For the first six years of his career, he practiced with

Kansas City firm Jackson Dillard, a real estate and commercial transaction law firm.

While he enjoyed the work and his colleagues, he said the commute from Lafayette County to Kansas City wore on him. In April 1987, he joined Langdon, who was practicing at a general practice law firm founded by the father of former U.S. Rep. Ike Skelton.

Emison said the best part of his practice is being able to help people in need. He said his clients have experienced serious or catastrophic injuries or have lost a loved one, and he meets them at the worst points in their lives.

"To make a better life for them is the best," he said. "It's the best thing I think anybody can want to do."

Today, Emison is joined at the firm by his three sons, two of whom are also lawyers. He said his wife, Robin, also has pitched in at the firm, including helping to make trial exhibits. He credits her for his successes.

"She's been supportive from the get-go, and she's made a lot of sacrifices," he said. "Without her help and support, I would never have been able to do what we've done in the law practice or with the family."

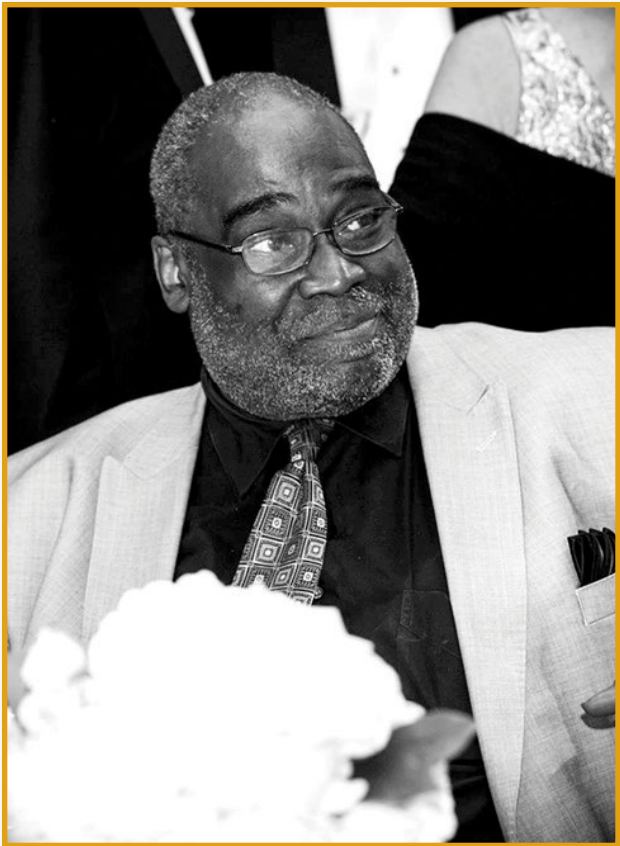
Emison also is dedicated to volunteering in the legal community and his local community. He is a past president of the Missouri Association of Trial Attorneys, and he also helped to organize a nonprofit organization in Lafayette County that has helped more than 100 people per year to obtain their GEDs.

— Jessica Shumaker

**"To make a better life for [clients] is the best."**



## Larry D. Hale



The Hale Law Firm

**O**f all the legacies the late Larry Hale leaves behind, one of the most visible is his investment in young Black attorneys in St. Louis.

As a result of his mentorship, three Black judges joined the bench in St. Louis County and St. Louis circuit courts from his firm in St. Louis. They include retired St. Louis County Presiding Judge Gloria Clark Reno, the county’s first Black presiding judge (and also a 2020 ICON Awards honoree); St. Louis County Circuit Judge David L. Vincent III; and St. Louis Circuit Judge Calea Stovall-Reid.

Hale’s former law partner Veo Peoples Jr. said Hale felt strongly about representation of Black attorneys on the bench. Early in their practice together, Hale became critical of the St. Louis County Circuit Court and its lack of Black judges, Peoples said. He recalled that Hale gave comments to the Riverfront Times newspaper in St. Louis in which he blasted the lack of Black judges in the circuit.

“It was poetic justice that lawyers who had worked in our firm ultimately worked their way into the 21st Judicial Circuit as among the first African Americans there,” he said. “We’ve had Black lawyers in the city of St. Louis for over 100 years. It was ridiculous.”

Hale was 67 when he died in January of a heart attack. Born in Chicago, he earned his undergraduate degree at Wartburg College in 1974 before enrolling at Saint Louis University School of Law in 1975. He graduated in 1979 and joined the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of Missouri as an assistant U.S. attorney.

In 1986, Hale left the U.S. Attorney’s Office and worked alongside Harold Whitfield and legendary civil rights attorney Frankie Freeman before joining Peoples in 1988

to start a new firm, Peoples said. A year later, Dorothy White-Coleman joined the firm, which became Peoples, Hale & Coleman.

At the time of his death, Hale ran his own firm, the Hale Law Firm. He also was an adjunct professor at Washington University in St. Louis School of Law and served on the Missouri Gaming Commission.

Those who knew Hale well remember his devotion to his family, his kindness and sense of humor, his work ethic and his scrupulous ethics.

White-Coleman said he worked hard from the time he arrived in the office until he left for the day.

“Everybody who knew Larry and everybody who opposed Larry knows that he was an excellent lawyer. Larry was top of the line,” she said. “I think what distinguished him was his work ethic.”

Even in the heat of battle, she said, he was still a consummate professional.

“He wanted to win as much as anyone else — we all did — but at the same time, winning wasn’t everything to him,” she said. “It was the way you went about winning that mattered to Larry.”

Peoples said Hale had an impressive command of language and was incisive in his legal analysis. Additionally, he said, Hale had an ethically sound practice — a point echoed by White-Coleman.


“He did not shy away from what was right and what was required under the rules of ethics,” she said. “Anybody who suggested otherwise quickly knew that they were in the wrong place.”

— Jessica Shumaker

**“It was the way you went about winnning that mattered to Larry.”**

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## M. Ann Hatch



Sandberg Phoenix & von Gontard

Ann Hatch comes from a family of lawyers, but she initially didn't feel much of a pull to the profession.

That changed, however, after she obtained her bachelor's degree in medical technology at Saint Louis University and worked in a hospital chemistry lab.

"I was looking for a change, and my dad was an attorney for 40 years," she said.

She returned to SLU for law school and graduated with her degree in 1978.

Out of law school, she became an assistant public defender in her native St. Clair County, Illinois. She worked as a public defender until 1983, when she left to join Churchill & McDonnell, a civil litigation defense firm in Belleville, Illinois.

She eventually became a name partner, and the firm became Churchill, McDonnell & Hatch. While at the firm, she also handled a variety of criminal cases — including death penalty cases — when the public defender's office had a conflict.

In 1997, she left the firm to join Herzog Crebs, where she served as one of the firm's three managing partners. When Herzog Crebs dissolved in May 2018, she and other lawyers from the firm joined Sandberg Phoenix & von Gontard.

Today, as a shareholder at Sandberg Phoenix, she practices in civil litigation defense, with a focus on products liability, personal injury defense, premises liability, asbestos and toxic-tort defense.

Of all the cases on which she's worked, one of the most meaningful involved representing a man accused

of murder, she said. After the man's first trial ended in a mistrial, she became his attorney for his second. The man was acquitted.

"I've always felt good about that case because he went on to go to college, get a job," she said. "He's been gainfully employed, been a good member of society. Had we not gotten that result, that would not have happened."

Outside of her practice, Hatch is a past president and current board member for Land of Lincoln Legal Aid. She also has served on the board of directors of CASA of Southwest Illinois for more than 20 years.

Hatch said women have come a long way in the legal profession since she began her career. She recalled a conversation with her father while she was applying for law school.

"My dad said, 'You want to go to law school?' and I said, 'Yeah.' He said, 'We've got a woman who practices law in our area.' That's how things were."

Hatch was the first woman to become president of the St. Clair County Bar Association. When she joined Herzog Crebs, there were no women in management, she said.

As a result, she feels strongly about mentoring young women today. Still, there is still a long way for women attorneys to go, especially in obtaining greater representation in law firm leadership roles, she said.

"Women have a lot to contribute," she said. "I think we're more willing to compromise in certain situations and look at the viewpoints of others."

— Jessica Shumaker

**"I think [women] are more willing to compromise in certain situations and look at the viewpoints of others."**

## Annette P. Heller



Law Offices of Annette P. Heller

In a number of ways, Annette Heller has been a trailblazer within the legal profession.

When studying to become a lawyer, she was one of only 10 women in her starting class at Saint Louis University School of Law. She also pioneered a trademark and copyright practice in St. Louis at a time when lawyers generally did not focus solely on those areas.

The St. Louis native said she was encouraged to become a lawyer by three men in her life. One was an undergraduate professor who taught business law, and another was a lawyer she worked with at her first job out of college, at the Ralston Purina Company.

"The last person that encouraged me — I married," she said. That encouragement was especially noteworthy because it came in the early 1970s, she said.

"Most guys would never have thought about a woman going to law school because it was very few of us at the time," she said.

With his support, she attended night school at SLU Law, graduating in 1976. She said she remembers that year especially well because she was four months pregnant with her first son when she took the bar exam.

Out of law school, Heller worked as a trademark and copyright attorney in-house for Ralston Purina until 1983, when she decided to strike out and establish her own firm. She said she needed more flexibility to raise her children than the corporate world offered.

"It was a big leap for me because I didn't really know if it would work, but it did, and I'm very pleased that I made

that decision with the encouragement of my husband and his support," she said.

When she started her firm, Heller said other attorneys in St. Louis weren't exclusively doing trademark and copyright law.

"It's an area that most general lawyers don't have any experience in," she said. "It's overlooked until a problem arises and [a company is] told they have to change their name. To some businesses, that could be a death sentence."

Heller said she enjoys talking with her clients about their work and how they can best promote it. She works mostly with small and medium-size businesses. Her clients through the years have included Scottrade and the illustrator Mary Engelbreit.

Heller is among the country's top trademark attorneys in terms of the number of trademark applications she has filed. During her career, she has filed more than 4,800 trademark applications. Of that number, she estimates she has successfully registered at least 75 percent.

Heller is a founding member and former president of The Women Lawyers Association of Greater St. Louis and a former member of The Missouri Bar's Board of Governors. She also serves as an at-large member of the board of The Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis, and she is a longtime member of The Lawyers Association of St. Louis and a regular in the group's annual Gridiron Show.

— Jessica Shumaker

**"[Establishing a firm] was a big leap for me because I didn't really know if it would work, but it did."**



## Edward Hershewe



The Hershewe Law Firm

Reflecting on his four-decade career, Ed Hershewe is, above all else, grateful for the opportunities he's had as a lawyer.

"I don't know what I would have done if I hadn't been a lawyer," he said. "I may have had to work for a living, and that would have been awful."

He said his wife Alison, also a lawyer and his law partner, frequently has said he's never worked a day in his life because he loves the work.

"It's not like you don't think of the hours, you don't think of the hard work, day in and day out," he said. "I like coming to the office and dealing with clients and other lawyers and things like that."

From a young age, the St. Joseph native knew he wanted to become a lawyer.

"I've always been attracted to the law and to the justice system in general — just how powerful and stabilizing a force it is in our society," he said.

He earned his law degree from the University of Tennessee College of Law in 1976.

Early on, he was drawn to litigation. He came to Joplin to work with a solo practitioner who had a general practice but also handled several personal injury cases.

Hershewe said he came to enjoy personal injury work most. He also discovered he didn't want to do domestic or criminal law after finding the latter to be too stressful.

"I had a couple of clients who went to prison. It's just tough," he said. "It was a very traumatic experience when you believe that your guys are not guilty."

In late 1979, he started The Hershewe Law Firm. Through his career, he's tried more than 150 trials as the first-chair attorney. He laments the decrease in jury trials through the years, saying he was lucky to get his start when he might try multiple cases in one week.

The aspect of personal injury law he most enjoys is that, while cases tend to have similarities, "each case is so unique that you're constantly on your toes," he said.

"You may be doing a products case one day, the next day, you're taking depositions in a malpractice case and the day after that, you'll take depositions in a slip-and-fall [case]," he said. "Just the preparation work always keeps you on your toes."

In 2016, Hershewe founded The Law Store, a law firm offering a wide range of services, based in Walmart stores. He has since sold the company to the iCan insurance company.

Outside his practice, Hershewe also is involved in Missouri's legal community. He has served on The Missouri Bar's Board of Governors since 2004, and the Missouri Association of Trial Attorneys' Board of Governors in two stints, from 1983 to 1993, and from 2003 to the present.

He is quick to credit his successes to others in his firm, from his office staff to his law partners.

"I've been blessed to have people who have been with me 30-plus years," he said. "You learn to love those people, and they become your family."

— Jessica Shumaker

## "I don't know what I would have done if I hadn't been a lawyer."



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## Mark B. Hillis



Carmody MacDonald

For Mark Hillis, becoming a lawyer was a natural progression.

Hillis, a native of Logansport, Indiana, followed in the footsteps of both his father and his grandfather when he studied law at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, where he graduated in 1972.

Both of his forebears practiced in Logansport, and while he may have entertained becoming a veterinarian briefly, he always steered back to the law.

“It just seemed very natural to do that,” he said.

Out of law school, he joined a small firm in Indianapolis, where he worked for two years. There, he gravitated toward a senior attorney who practiced in banking and commercial real estate, he said. He found he enjoyed that work and has continued to focus on those areas ever since.

In 1974, his interest in teaching drew him to St. Louis, where he was offered a two-year opportunity to teach at Washington University in St. Louis School of Law.

During his last year of teaching, a visiting professor introduced him to what was then Bryan Cave and encouraged him to join the firm’s corporate law practice. He worked for the firm from 1976 until 1981, when he moved back to Indianapolis to practice at a firm with his law school friends.

Ultimately, he came back to St. Louis.

“The siren of the mother ship at Bryan Cave became too loud,” he said, and he rejoined the firm in 1985. Hillis served as managing partner of Bryan Cave for three years in the 1990s and practiced with the firm until 2005, when

he joined Carmody MacDonald.

Looking back on his career, he said he is most proud of the projects that allowed him to bring solutions to his clients, particularly in the context of family-held businesses. He said one such case involved helping to steer the resolution of corporate and succession planning in the context of the family’s desire to sell the business.

Hillis has earned a reputation for taking new attorneys under his wing as a mentor. Mentoring is personally rewarding, he said, and it also is important to the long-term health of a law firm.

“Without that, you lose those strands of stability and passing on the culture of the practice and how the professional behavior of a lawyer — not only with clients, but also communities and colleagues within the firm — how that all should play out,” he said. “Really, it’s a combination of personal enjoyment and professional responsibility.”

Outside of his practice, Hillis has served on the boards for Junior Achievement of Greater St. Louis, St. Andrew’s Resources for Seniors and other community organizations.

Hillis said his success isn’t all due to his own work. He credits others who helped him through his career.

“Your mentors, your clients, your colleagues, your family — it all adds up,” he said. “That’s the soup that has to be cooked to reach the kind of professional satisfaction level that I have.”

— Jessica Shumaker

**“Your mentors, your clients, your colleagues, your family — it all adds up.”**

## Jerry M. Hunter



Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner

Jerry Hunter recalls a police officer showing up at his childhood home in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, in search of one of his relatives. Hunter, then a freshman in high school, politely asked if the law enforcement officer had a warrant.

“He did not like hearing that from a young black teenager,” Hunter said of the encounter more than 50 years ago. “He said, ‘OK, instead I’ll just take you down then.’”

The young man spent the night in jail before the charges were dismissed.

Despite that unpleasant introduction to the law — as well as his initial inclination to become a math teacher — Hunter went on to pursue a career in the legal field.

The first in his family to go to college and the youngest of 11 children, the Washington University in St. Louis School of Law graduate nurtured a lifelong interest in civics and government. He was offered a summer internship with the National Labor Relations Board, which eventually led to a permanent position. Later, structural changes at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission led to a need for trial lawyers in St. Louis, and Hunter joined the EEOC, where he dealt with age discrimination, equal pay and Title VII claims.

After a stint as corporate in-house counsel for a Fortune 500 company in the mid-1980s, Hunter was appointed by then-Gov. John Ashcroft to head the state’s Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. A presidential appointment took him back to the NLRB, where he served as general counsel overseeing about 1,800 employees.

Although it was his favorite job, the position was a busy one that — between personnel, disciplinary, budgetary and other logistical issues — encompassed far more than just the practice of law, he said.

“Sometimes, I would have to do my legal work at night,” Hunter said. “Most of my daytime hours at the office a lot of times were taken up with administrative work.”

In 1994, he joined his current firm, where as a partner he helps clients to navigate the complexities of labor and employment law. He uses his vast experience to advise on everything from preventative labor relations and supervisory training to labor arbitrations and handling charges filed with the NLRB, the EEOC and other agencies. He also sometimes serves as an outside investigator in matters involving racial or sexual harassment.

“I enjoy it because there are always new and fresh issues — novel issues — that arise in the practice of labor and employment law, things you can’t foresee that may arise at some point in the future,” he said, noting that current events since the onset of COVID-19 have brought up a range of new questions and intricacies.

But through all of his career changes, Hunter, a father of two, said he’s remembered the values his mother taught him back in Pine Bluff — namely, to accord respect to everyone and treat others the way he’d want to be treated.

“I try to always be open to listening to individuals I worked with and dealt with, and learn from each of those experiences, from my first job up until today,” he said.

— David Baugher

**“I try to always be open to listening to individuals I worked with and dealt with, and learn from each of those experiences.”**



## Bennett S. Keller



Lathrop GPM

**O**n boring, rainy days, some kids pass the time playing at being an astronaut or a cowboy. Bennett Keller liked to play attorney.

“My mom would set me up at a little desk and say, ‘Why don’t you pretend you’re a lawyer and help people?’” he said. “I never deviated from that from day one. It is what I always wanted to do.”

His desk has gotten bigger through the years, and so has his ability to help others. Today, the partner-in-charge of the St. Louis office of Lathrop GPM has broadened his original practice in estate planning into a unique niche that focuses on business transition work, helping companies and family-run businesses to move from one generation of owners or managers to the next.

A graduate of the University of Missouri School of Law, Keller began his estate planning practice at Popkin & Stern before moving in 1990 to Rosenblum Goldenhersh, where he’d spend more than a decade. He began his own transition by expanding his work to include business succession planning, a field in which he would go on to teach classes at Washington University in St. Louis.

After a stint with Blumenfeld Kaplan & Sandweiss, he moved in 2007 to Lathrop, where he was asked to lead the St. Louis office.

“He embraced the challenge, never looking back,” his nominator wrote, “and his office that started with eight attorneys now boasts 35, along with approximately 30 staff members, and stands as the firm’s third-largest office nationwide.”

Keller, who previously served as a member of Lathrop’s Executive Committee, also spent time as an appointee on the Missouri Supreme Court’s investigative committee.

His commitments have ranged from a seat on Missouri’s Tourism Commission to membership in The Missouri Bar’s durable power of attorney subcommittee. He is active with the Estate Planning Council of St. Louis and has worked with top executives from Fortune 500 companies developing a reputation for excellence in his field.

It is a field he deeply enjoys.

“It is different every day,” he said, noting that good “corporate hygiene” that puts proper practices in place can increase the value of a business by as much as 20 percent. “I see value in helping families to think differently than they might have thought about the process before.”

Keller, a father of one and grandfather of two, said the most important aspect of his philosophy of practicing law is to listen, not just wait for his turn to talk. It is the opposite of the talking-head punditry shows popular on television, he said.

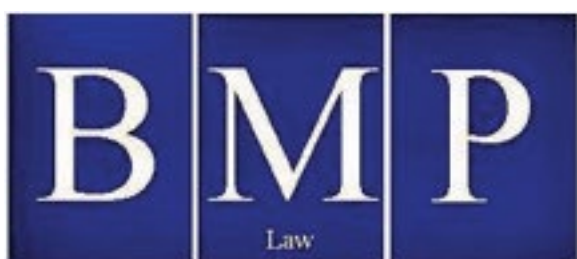
“Those are unwatchable programs, not because of their political content, but because no one lets anybody talk,” he said. “All they do is interrupt people.”

His ability to listen has enabled him to navigate the sometimes emotionally difficult process of helping corporate leaders and family business owners to manage changes smoothly.

“It is gratifying knowing that we’ve reached a number of people to help transition their business successfully,” he said. “I do like what I do. Even in these crazy times, it is still rewarding.”

— David Baugher

**“I do like what I do. Even in these crazy times, it is still rewarding.”**



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## Louis J. Leonatti



Leonatti & Baker

Louis J. Leonatti has spent his entire career in the same building. That's not to say that he hasn't made some progress during four-and-a-half decades.

"I went from the office in back to the office up front," said the president of Leonatti & Baker.

The grandson of Italian immigrants, Leonatti said a nun at his Catholic school was the first to suggest he might make a good attorney. The St. Louis County native graduated from law school at the University of Missouri and went to Mexico, Missouri for his first job. He's been there ever since.

Why become a lawyer?

"When your bachelor's degree is in American history and the Civil War, and you are getting married, you had better find something pretty fast," he said with a chuckle.

After working for then-Attorney General John Danforth's campaign while in college, Leonatti built a career mostly on the defense side of personal injury law. He's also been city attorney for Mexico, has represented various municipal governments and was once a nominee for a federal judgeship.

Leonatti is a past president of the Audrain County Bar Association and the Missouri Organization of Defense Lawyers, as well as a past member of the executive council of the Association of Defense Trial Attorneys and the board of directors of the Missouri chapter of the American College of Trial Lawyers. He also has served on the state Supreme Court's Committee on Jury Instructions and Charges.

A one-time vice chair of the Missouri Ethics Commission, he also was appointed as a special assistant attorney general by the Circuit Court of Cole County

to investigate the governor's office's compliance with open meeting laws. In 2016, the Missouri Organization of Defense Lawyers recognized him with its Ben Ely Jr. Outstanding Defense Lawyer Award, presented each year to an attorney in the state who exhibits high moral, ethical and professional standards.

Leonatti also has been honored for a dizzying list of civic and community involvements, which include past presidencies of the Catholic Diocese Excellence in Education Fund as well as the area's Rotary Club and the Chamber of Commerce.

"Without question, Lou exemplifies the highest qualities of the legal profession," writes his nominator. "He is forthright, honorable, knowledgeable in the law, highly skilled in both the courtroom and the office, and trustworthy."

Leonatti said his favorite part of the job always has been going to court.

"It is almost like a shootout at the OK Corral," he said. "You've got to convince people that you are right. That takes a lot of preparation and a lot of skill."

He recalled one case in which he represented a little boy who'd had an adverse reaction to whooping cough vaccine. The matter was settled on the first day of trial, and it helped to establish the need for a predecessor to what would become a federal vaccine fund.

It is just one of the cases Leonatti handled that made a difference in the lives of others.

"I've been doing it for 45 years, and I've enjoyed every day of it," he said. "The intellectual challenge is thrilling."

— David Baugher

**"I've been doing it for 45 years, and I've enjoyed every day of it."**

## Theodore J. MacDonald Jr.



HeplerBroom

Theodore J. "Ted" MacDonald Jr. remembers taking the case of a man who had spent 13 years in the penitentiary and had exhausted all of his appeals.

MacDonald looked at the man's file and believed that his public defender had done little for him.

"Here's an individual who may not be a person society embraces or even likes, but [he] didn't get a fair shot," said MacDonald, a partner at HeplerBroom. "So I feel like that's a situation where it is much like the other folks I've represented. They are entitled to a fair shot and their best shot."

That theme does indeed run through MacDonald's professional history. Through four decades of private practice, he has defended everything from federal white-collar crime investigations to clergy-abuse accusations.

MacDonald has handled an array of matters ranging from natural gas incidents to negligence claims against hospitals. He also has argued more than 40 cases in state and federal courts, including the U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeals and the state Supreme Courts of Missouri and Illinois.

"Ted's reputation among his partners at HeplerBroom and his peers in the St. Louis legal community proves without a doubt that he is a true icon of The Missouri Bar," wrote his nominator, who also noted MacDonald's "stellar reputation as an advocate, litigator, professor and attorney of the utmost integrity."

A native of Rochester, New York, and the son of a printing company owner, MacDonald found he deeply admired the attorneys who helped his dad work through

issues with the business. An English major at the University of Pennsylvania, he eventually went to work in sales for IBM.

"Some of my clients were lawyers, so I would sit down and talk to them," he said. "What were they doing? And how did they like what they do? It got me interested in the law."

After law school at Saint Louis University, that interest led him to a four-year stint in the U.S. Attorney's office for the Southern District of Illinois.

"If you wanted to be a trial lawyer, there was really no better place to get experience in the courtroom," he said.

After joining Thompson Coburn, where he became a partner in 1986, he moved on to his current firm, where he sits on the management committee and concentrates on employment litigation as well as medical malpractice and white-collar criminal defense work. For more than a quarter-century, he's also taught as an adjunct professor at Washington University in St. Louis School of Law.

"I've always liked being able to help professionals of various fields who get sued and need representation with their career on the line," MacDonald said.

As far as he's concerned, getting people their shot in court is just doing what comes naturally to him.

"A lot of people say [my practice areas are] very varied specialties, and I've looked at it and said it is actually sort of the same thing — to help them with the representation I can provide them in difficult circumstances," he said.

— David Baugher

**"[My clients] are entitled to a fair shot and their best shot."**



## Tom Minogue



Thompson Coburn

Tom Minogue took an aptitude test when he was young, and it gave him a couple of options — lawyer or recreational advisor/playground superintendent.

His response to the latter choice?

“Well, I am managing partner of a law firm, so you can read into that what you want,” he joked in an interview earlier this year.

Thompson Coburn is certainly glad Minogue, now the firm’s immediate past chair, chose the direction that he did.

The firm, which he joined directly out of Harvard Law School, enjoyed solid growth and national expansion under his leadership while piling up awards for diversity and a desirable work environment. He’s proud that the organization laid no one off even during the worst of the Great Recession.

Minogue said he also likes to think he’s helped his clients to prosper by representing Enterprise Holdings as it grew into the largest rental car company in the world, UniGroup as it blossomed into the biggest household-goods moving business and Barry-Wehmiller as it expanded to become the pre-eminent packaging machinery manufacturer.

“There are large deals that I have worked on that come to mind through the course of my career, but I prefer to think more in terms of the relationships that I’ve had with the people and the companies over time,” he said. “When you’ve had a multi-decade career, you can look at those sorts of relationships and how the people and companies you’ve worked with have prospered over the years. You managed to play some role in helping them to do that.”

Minogue, who became a partner at Thompson Coburn in 1985, returned to full-time practice in July after leading the firm for 20 years. He said it is no mystery why he’s been in the same place for so long.

“I’ve always enjoyed the work, and I’ve always enjoyed the people,” he said. “Once I’d learned the craft, if you will, and saw I was surrounded by really capable people that I could continue to learn from, that’s what kept me around.”

His list of civic involvements is equally long. A partial inventory: He’s been a director of the Missouri Affiliate of the American Heart Association, the U.S. Bank Advisory Board, the Navy League of St. Louis and the St. Louis Economic Development Alliance, as well as the executive committees of the St. Louis Council of the Boy Scouts of America, COCA, the Ranken Jordan Pediatric Rehabilitation Center and the United Way of Greater St. Louis.

“That’s something important for professionals to do,” he said. “We’re blessed with the careers that we have. Giving back is really important.”

A native of St. Louis County, Minogue was the first in his family to graduate from college. He said he was quickly attracted to the law after initially studying political science and economics.

“You feel like you are really accomplishing something because you are really accomplishing something,” he said of the legal field. “I’ve always believed that the most important thing you can do as a leader is be optimistic. That can be an interesting experience in a law firm because most lawyers aren’t by general nature immediate optimists.”

— David Baugher

**“I’ve always believed that the most important thing you can do as a leader is be optimistic.”**



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## Daniel T. Moore



Moore Law Firm

Attorney Daniel T. Moore felt he might pursue a law career as early as the fifth or sixth grade. But doing so meant drawing more from history than from personal experience.

“I never met a lawyer, never had a lawyer in the family, but it seemed to me that a lot of people who had helped to form the country were lawyers,” he said.

That inspiration has been important to Moore, who practices both criminal and civil law. A native of Sparta, he has handled everything from death-penalty murder trial appeals before the state Supreme Court to music-piracy matters in New York to the wrongful-termination case of a Veterans Affairs hospital chaplain before the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit in Washington, D.C.

“I like to make sure that people’s constitutional rights are enforced,” said Moore, a graduate of the University of Missouri School of Law and a solo practitioner in Poplar Bluff. “I won’t let people get run over just because they may not know what their rights are to assert them.”

During more than 40 years of practice, his belief in standing up for the rights of others has led to some unique cases. At one time, he represented a number of individuals in rural Missouri who had been accused of “deer dogging” — the practice of using canines to hunt

deer, an activity on which the federal government had been cracking down. Moore said he defended about 25 people in federal court and possibly as many as a dozen others who had been brought up on state charges.

Not one was convicted, he said.

“Either the motions to suppress were successful or finally the government just gave up,” Moore said.

In 2011, his work with clients in deer-dogging cases was featured in a Missouri Lawyers Weekly article. The Columbia Missourian also quoted him in 2019 in a story detailing his defense of people saddled with excessive medical debt.

Further, he represented defendants in chicken-fighting cases who were accused under a law that the Missouri Supreme Court later declared was unconstitutional.

Moore is the first to say he wishes he’d kept track of the number of times he’s stood before a panel of jurors through the years. Others have likewise noted that the figure, if calculated, would be substantial.

“No attorney in southeast Missouri, and possibly the entire state, has tried more criminal jury trials than Dan Moore,” his nominator wrote, calling him a local legend and an icon to people in the region. “From homicides to wildlife violations, he has a well-earned reputation.”

— David Baugher

**“I like to make sure that people’s constitutional rights are enforced.”**

## J. Michael Mowrer



Dalton, Mowrer, and Chidister

Born at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and raised in Putnam County, Missouri, John Michael Mowrer never had a desire to move to a big, metropolitan law firm.

“The challenges that small rural communities have had for a long time and still have generate lots of law issues,” said Mowrer, a partner at Dalton, Mowrer, and Chidister in Kennett. “I found that to be enjoyable because there is a large variety of things in the practice of municipal law.”

He’s had plenty of opportunity to explore those things during more than 40 years in the field. After serving as a battery commander in Vietnam and teaching military science at the University of Missouri, he made a transition to the legal world.

“I walked from the Army ROTC building one day to the law school building the next,” he said.

Mowrer distinguished himself in a variety of roles as a municipal judge for Kennett since 1978 and as city counselor for nearby Campbell since the late 1990s. He also spent more than a decade as counselor for the city of Malden. Until 2004, he sat on The Missouri Bar’s client security fund committee.

He’s also active in organizations outside the courtroom. He is a member of his local VFW and American Legion posts and spent a term on the Missouri Veterans Commission Foundation.

“Service to veterans and their families is something that is a passion of mine,” said Mowrer, who at age 75 is retiring from his judgeship. “I can direct more time to that now that I’m not sitting on the bench.”

Mowrer also is active in the United Methodist Church at the state level and is a recipient of the Boy Scouts of America’s Silver Beaver Award. Scouting is important, he

said, because it enables young men to evolve from youth to maturity “discovering themselves, each other and the world.”

“It is really amazing to watch that development,” he said.

Mowrer’s journey to the law started when he began to see attorney and former U.S. Rep. Clare Magee, also of Putnam County, as a role model.

“It was a small town, and I just remember him walking around looking like he knew what he was doing,” Mowrer said, laughing.

After earning his agricultural economics degree and going overseas to serve in Southeast Asia, he obtained his law degree and joined former Gov. John Dalton’s law firm in 1977. He hasn’t left since, and he said he’s particularly enjoyed his time as a municipal judge.

“If nothing else, once a week, it gave me a different view of the world,” noted Mowrer, who identifies integrity as the most important characteristic of an attorney. “You are not sitting behind a desk or in a courtroom being a lawyer. You are behind the bench listening and hearing how people can get themselves into difficulties and what you can do about that.”

He also enjoyed trial work in the courtroom.

“It was rewarding and fulfilling,” he said. “You actually saw results — not always the right result from your or your client’s standpoint. But there was a beginning and — usually — an end.”

And today, he’s proud to say his granddaughter is in law school at Saint Louis University.

— David Baugher

**“There is a large variety of things in the practice of municipal law.”**



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## Donald W. Paule



Paule, Camazine & Blumenthal

Like that of many a high school math whiz, Don Paule's path to college led straight to an undergraduate major in engineering.

At Washington University in St. Louis, Engineering Dean Don Fischer — himself a patent attorney — saw in Paule a student who also could benefit from the same unusual, dual path.

That led to the creation of a combined degree program that allowed Paule, who grew up in south St. Louis, to graduate a year early from the WashU law school. After a year on the business side with Monsanto, Paule embarked on a 53-year legal career in business and commercial law, from mergers and acquisitions and real estate development to estate and tax planning.

"I had no intention of practicing law," he said. "I thought engineering was the right path, but once I was in school, I became more interested in my classes in business, accounting and economics."

Paule would go on to earn a third degree from WashU, an LLM in taxation, which led to a 40-plus-year stint as an adjunct faculty member in the MBA program at his alma mater's business school. He taught law and business management until last year.

While he didn't pursue engineering professionally, the father of five and grandfather of 11 attributes much of his subsequent success to that early training.

"Engineering was a tremendous pre-law education," said Paule. "It taught you problem-solving and logic, and that's all we do in law. It's just a different set of problems."

During his law career, Paule has helped to found several

firms, including Love Lachs & Paule and, in 1994, his current firm with Alisse C. Camazine and Thomas M. Blumenthal. A quarter-century later, the firm has grown to more than 31 attorneys.

"Don has represented a variety of well-known clients in the St. Louis region, including several large companies, [and for more than] 50 years gained a reputation for being a tough but reasonable and fair lawyer," his nominator wrote. "Don is ethical, prepared and hard-working, [and his] clients, law partners and the community are grateful for his work."

Among his many clients — who range from automobile dealers and manufacturers to restaurants and construction companies — Paule said he particularly enjoyed representing closely held family businesses, helping them to navigate all aspects of shareholder and ownership-succession planning.

Outside the courtroom, Paule's civic and community involvement is also sizable. He's served on the board of directors for Consolidated Grain and Barge, Cupples Company Manufacturers and Maritz.

A former St. Louis County Bar Association president, he chaired the county's Civil Service Commission, the West County YMCA, The College School and the Visiting Nurses Association of Greater St. Louis. He also spent 12 years on the board of Lindenwood University.

"I always thought that was a responsibility that all attorneys should accept," he said of his extensive civic involvement.

— Alan Scher Zagier

**"I always thought [civic involvement] was a responsibility that all lawyers should accept."**

## Scott Rosenblum



Rosenblum, Schwartz & Fry

What's a trial lawyer whose tireless work ethic stands out even among his hard-charging peers to do when the court calendar shuts down for months amid a global pandemic?

In the case of St. Louis criminal defense lawyer Scott Rosenblum, the extended shutdown this spring and summer enabled one concession: a break from the 3:30 a.m. alarm buzzer for same-day trial preparation.

The prolonged absence from the familiar confines of trial court did give Rosenblum the chance to add a second daily workout to his regimen. But the noted workaholic otherwise didn't learn to bake sourdough bread, plant a backyard vegetable garden or download a cache of self-improvement podcasts.

Instead, Rosenblum said he was eager to return to the daily rhythms that have come to define his professional life.

"This has been the longest I've gone without a jury trial in 25 or 30 years," he said. "We're in a brave new world."

More than a decade after being recognized by Missouri Lawyers Media as both Best-Dressed Man (for his sartorial prowess) and Best Lawyer to Call if You're Accused of Killing Someone (for his legal acumen), Rosenblum's profile and stature have only grown.

Long known for his roster of local celebrity clients, including pro athletes and other headline-grabbers, Rosenblum is quick to highlight his efforts in the bulk of cases that don't draw public attention.

"I defend facts more than people," he said. "I believe in the system. We are the last link in the chain of constitutional protections."

A graduate of Parkway Central High School, the University of Missouri and California Western School of Law, Rosenblum began his legal career in 1983 in his uncle Howard Wittner's firm in Clayton. He rose to

partner and remained there for 16 years before forming his own criminal defense firm.

Current partner Matt Fry, first hired by Rosenblum as a law clerk, called his colleague a worthy heir to the likes of Don Wolff and Charlie Shaw as St. Louis' top criminal defense lawyer.

"Growing up in criminal defense, you hear those names," Fry said. "Scott has dedicated his entire career to being the best criminal defense attorney possible."

Among his career honors: Rosenblum was inducted into the International Academy of Trial Lawyers in 2016 and is a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers. He also has won both the Atticus Finch Award (for those who serve "unflinchingly, while defending unpopular clients or taking up unpopular causes" and the Charles M. Shaw Trial Attorney Award (for "those who exhibit outstanding trial skills and a passion for trying cases involving the innocent accused") from the Missouri Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers.

Rosenblum acknowledged he "can come off as serious and maybe aloof" to some, but those who know him best describe a passionate advocate with a firm idealistic streak.

"I believe this is an incredibly honorable profession," he said. "And no matter where I've been in my career, I've always honored the profession."

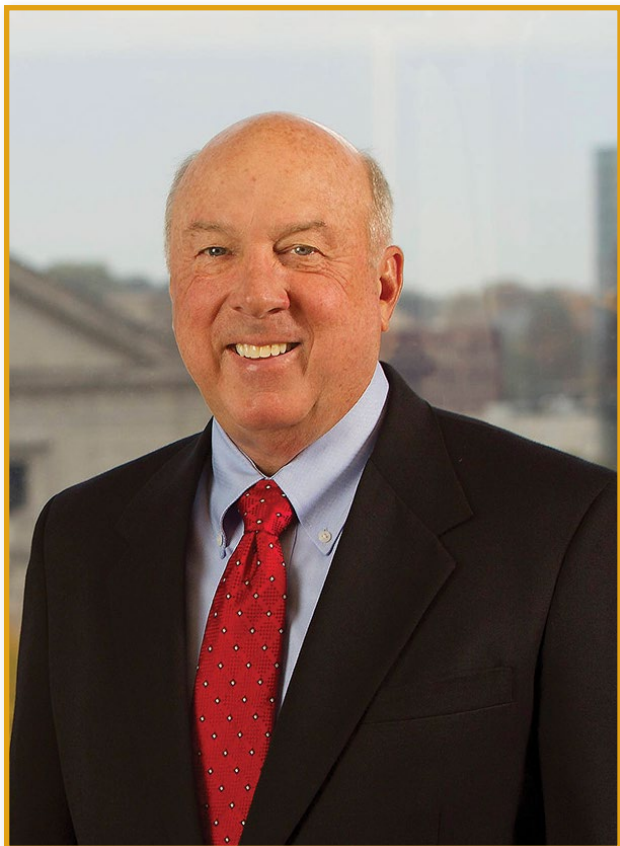
The father of four (including triplets) also can boast that each of his children has become a lawyer, though none practices criminal defense — at least not yet. Youngest son Reed, a 2020 Saint Louis University School of Law graduate, wants to first work as a prosecutor but then hopes to follow in his father's footsteps, the elder Rosenblum said.

— Alan Scher Zagier

**"No matter where I've been in my career, I've always honored the profession."**



## Thomas N. Sterchi



**Baker Sterchi Cowden & Rice**

Few who've squared off against legendary Hollywood tough guy Chuck Norris can claim victory, but you can count Kansas City product liability specialist Tom Sterchi on that decidedly short list.

During his 48-year career in civil litigation, Sterchi has represented pharmaceutical giants such as Johnson & Johnson, Novo Nordisk and the predecessor to what is now Bristol Myers Squibb. His experience ranges from mass torts and multi-district litigation to class action lawsuit defense — including cases involving hormone therapy litigation, toxic shock syndrome and breast implants. He's won numerous professional honors in recognition of that expertise.

But it's his recent role — successfully defending Bracco Diagnostics Inc, an Italian company sued by Norris and his wife Gena in regard to an MRI contrast agent — that made headlines. The couple vacated their lawsuit against the gadolinium maker in January without any settlement and with each side agreeing to cover its own legal expenses.

The case is one of thousands Sterchi defended while becoming a locally, nationally and internationally respected trial lawyer, his nominator noted, adding that he's also served as local, regional and national trial counsel for numerous Fortune 500 companies.

Through the years, he's also been involved with the Product Liability Advisory Council, the Federation of Defense and Corporate Counsel, the Defense Research Institute, the Claims and Litigation Management Alliance and the Missouri Organization of Defense Lawyers, as well as The Missouri Bar and the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association.

A native of southern Illinois, Sterchi didn't set out to work in product liability defense — which evolved from

his earlier work in medical malpractice defense — or even the law, for that matter.

A varsity tennis player at Eastern Illinois University, he graduated with a bachelor's degree in education and plans to teach history and coach tennis and basketball in Elkhart, Indiana. A lawyer-uncle convinced Sterchi to attend law school instead, and the diehard St. Louis Cardinals and Mizzou football fan headed to Columbia.

"I hadn't yet signed the teaching contract but told them I would come up for the interview," Sterchi recalled. "I got the job offer but decided to listen to my uncle."

The career switch didn't keep the U.S. Army veteran off the courts or the hardwood, though. Starting with his own four children (one of whom followed his father into the law), Sterchi coached youth basketball, tennis and soccer for years in the Kansas City suburb of Shawnee Mission.

He also spent seven years as commissioner of the Great American Basketball League, which serves thousands of boys and girls in the Kansas City area. Many of those young men and women continue to proudly call him "Coach."

"I enjoyed kids, and I loved to teach and coach," he said.

Sterchi also cites the growth of the firm he co-founded with Tom Baker in 1982 — known then as Baker & Sterchi — among his proudest accomplishments. The firm, which he serves as co-chairman, counts more than 100 employees at five offices in Kansas, Missouri and Illinois.

"It's very dear to my heart," he said. "Back in '82, you didn't leave big firms like we did to form a boutique trial law firm. We wanted to have a trial law practice of defense lawyers."

— Alan Scher Zagier

**“Back in '82, you didn't leave big firms like we did to form a boutique trial law firm.”**



**Paule, Camazine & Blumenthal, P.C. congratulates our icon, Donald W. Paule, on his recognition by Missouri Lawyers Weekly in its third annual Icon Awards. A dedicated mentor within the firm and a trusted advisor to clients, Don has spent his career exemplifying one guiding principle: do the right thing. We are proud to call you partner, mentor, and friend.**



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## Thomas Strong



**Strong-Garner-Bauer**

Child of the Depression, with a leaky roof and an outdoor (and downwind) “two-holer” for a bathroom, and who milked cows to pay his way through college. Army counterintelligence enlistee. History-making trial lawyer. Southwest Missouri civic leader, university benefactor and octogenarian yoga practitioner.

At 88, Tom Strong’s life could fill a book. Which he did in 2012, thanks to a suggestion from his daughter Stephanie.

Published by the University of Missouri Press, “Strong Advocate: The Life of a Trial Lawyer,” takes readers on a journey that stretches from the one-room schoolhouse with a total of 12 students in eight grades to his role representing the state of Missouri two decades ago in the Master Tobacco Settlement, to the 2007 creation of the Thomas G. Strong Trial Attorney Award by the Missouri Association of Trial Attorneys to honor its former president.

As a child, Strong dreamed of becoming a preacher. But by the time he landed at Southwest Missouri Teachers College, now Missouri State University, he had settled on becoming a lawyer. He majored in speech while taking courses such as orations, advanced argumentation, speech science and phonetics — training that would serve the future courtroom orator well.

“When I was in high school, I started reading about Rufus Choate, Clarence Darrow and all these great trial lawyers,” he recalled. “I was fascinated by what they had done. They represented poor people, folks shunned by society. I was inspired and wanted to make a difference.”

His alma mater — where Strong served eight years on the Board of Governors, including a term as president — named Strong Hall in honor of him and his family in 2002. Three years later, his efforts helped to convince state

lawmakers to approve the name change for what is now Missouri State. He also was given the university’s Bronze Bear Award — recognizing those who have exhibited “extraordinary achievement and/or outstanding support” — in 2006, and an honorary doctorate degree in 2015.

“Three generations of my family went there,” Strong noted, including his mother, who died three days before his high school graduation. “I’ve given the school some of my earthly possessions, but it has given my family something priceless.”

Strong earned his law degree from the University of Missouri in 1955. He has practiced in Springfield since 1957, where he began his career with what was then Farrington & Curtis. In 1976, he founded the firm now known as Strong-Garner-Bauer.

The father of three, grandfather and great-grandfather still goes to the office nearly every day during the week. An American history buff, he’s traded the courtroom for the classroom these days, speaking to groups ranging from local Rotary clubs to state appellate court judges.

“I’m just trying to stay relevant,” he joked.

Strong is an emeritus member of the Inner Circle of Advocates, an exclusive organization consisting of 100 of the leading trial lawyers in the nation. MATA also recognized his lifelong advocacy with its annual Thomas G. Strong Trial Attorney Award, which recognizes a “person of courage, with unimpeachable ethics, a sterling character and an outstanding record in the courtroom.”

The award remains among Strong’s proudest achievements.

“All those things are more important than a win-loss record,” he said of the criteria for the award. “If you have those things, you’ll win in the courtroom.”

— Alan Scher Zagier

**“When I was in high school, I started reading about . . . great trial lawyers. I was inspired and wanted to make a difference.”**

## Maurice A. Watson



**Husch Blackwell**

Maurice Watson made the move from law to socially responsible investment adviser two years before the global COVID-19 pandemic, the related economic collapse and widespread protests aimed at ending racial discrimination consumed much of society’s attention.

But for the former Husch Blackwell chairman — now principal and founder of Credo Philanthropy Advisers — the seismic challenges of 2020 put his second act’s mission squarely in focus.

“Traditional philanthropy continues to focus on problems,” he said. “But philanthropy can and should drive social change and play a meaningful role in directing public policy. For a long time, I have felt the need to work in this area in a meaningful way.”

A native of Kansas City’s East Side, Watson was the first Black graduate of the private Barstow School and earned both his undergraduate and law degrees at Harvard. He then worked for several years in Washington, D.C. as a senior aide to U.S. Sen. John Danforth, with a focus on social policy, education and health care — a portfolio that would largely mirror his future legal interests.

Watson returned home on the advice of mentor Irv Hockaday, the former Hallmark and Kansas City Southern CEO. It wasn’t a hard sell: the former Blackwell Sanders summer intern joined the firm later known as Husch Blackwell in 1986 and remained there for nearly 33 years — the final six as chair. Notable clients included the Kansas City Public Schools as the district battled the state after its loss of accreditation.

His civic involvement includes past positions as board president at the Barstow School, board secretary for the National Association of Independent Schools and 14 years as board chairman of Children’s Mercy Hospital. He sits on the boards of the Metropolitan Community College Foundation,

the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art and the University of Missouri-Kansas City trustees.

Watson’s elevation to chair at Husch Blackwell eight years ago made him the first African American in such a role in Missouri, and one of the first in the country. Like the rest of society, the legal profession is long overdue to correct that disparity, he said.

“Until we have a broader understanding of the role that race has played, the inequities that Black people in America have faced — a persistent problem that goes back 400 years — we can’t move forward,” he said. “It’s a stain on our history.”

In June, Watson wrote a guest commentary for the Kansas City Business Journal urging his white friends, neighbors and colleagues to “Do more than feel bad,” and instead pursue “intentional, thoughtful and disciplined action.”

Citing the “unprecedented infection of empathy . . . from our shared distress,” he called “the recent groundswell of opposition to racism generally and racist policing specifically . . . a once-in-a-lifetime experience.”

As a community leader, Watson continues to challenge his peers — and himself — to lean into the conversation that for many remained unspoken until the videotaped death of George Floyd.

“We need leaders who are courageous, well-informed and open to ideas and direction from those who don’t share the same perspectives and viewpoints that they do,” he said.

“Each and every one of us, myself included, have blind spots. The only way those blind spots can be addressed is from people who have different blind spots, who bring their own perspective and can tell you things you don’t know.

“I’m hopeful,” he emphasized. “This really is a different point in history.”

— Alan Scher Zagier

**“For a long time, I have felt the need to work in this area in a meaningful way.”**



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## Richard D. Watters



Lashly & Baer

For 44 years, Richard Watters has called Lashly & Baer home — a longevity streak few in the St. Louis legal community can match.

At age 69, he's traded in St. Louis for southwest Florida and turned over leadership of the firm's health law group, which he started; the concentration didn't exist when he began his career in general litigation, which was followed by a focus on employment law. That work with several hospital clients led to Watters' subsequent specialty.

With clients ranging from large hospital systems to individual physicians and nurses, he's handled cases involving Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement, certificates of need, business acquisitions and more. He represented the Daughters of Charity in the sale of DePaul Hospital to SSM Health, and Tenet in the purchase of Saint Louis University Hospital, Lutheran and St Alexius hospitals. He recently represented the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood, a religious order headquartered in St Louis, in its sale of two West Virginia hospitals, and he also has represented the Missouri Foundation for Health and Shriners Hospitals for Children.

While general counsel to the Missouri Nurses Association, he testified in Jefferson City in support of expanding the scope of practice for nurse practitioners. He was one of the first health care mediators to be certified by the American Health Lawyers Association, and he obtained state approval early in his career for the first nonacademic medical center in the state to offer open-heart surgery services, which now are commonplace at community hospitals.

As Watters' nomination form attests, there are few areas

of health law where he hasn't made his mark.

"He's been instrumental in improving access to health care services in underserved areas of Missouri," a nominator wrote. "His role in the expansion of these services for Missouri residents has been significant."

A stint living in Japan as a pre-teen had Watters dreaming of a possible career in the U.S. Foreign Service. His father and older brother worked as engineers, and Watters left Bradley University in 1973 with an undergraduate degree in industrial engineering. But he saw the technological writing on the wall — so it was off to Saint Louis University School of Law instead.

"I saw that the future of engineering was computers," he said. "And I didn't like computers."

Asked to outline his career highlights, Watters emphasized that "a lot of what we did was to help patients."

That includes a case in which he had to summon a probate judge from Sunday gardening duties for an emergency hospital hearing with the family of a dying woman who had refused to authorize life-saving care.

"The bottom line is, we saved her life," he said.

He credits Lashly & Baer colleagues John Fox Arnold and Kenneth C. Brostron (both former ICON Award winners) for their support in "giving me a lot of freedom to seek my areas of practice." While he's entertained offers to go elsewhere, Watters remained firmly in place.

"I had other opportunities," he said. "But the grass was never greener on the other side."

— Alan Scher Zagier

**"I saw that the future of engineering was computers. And I didn't like computers."**

## W. Russell Welsh



Polsinelli

When he traded in the U.S. Justice Department and Pennsylvania Avenue for Country Club Plaza and private practice, it wasn't the chance to transform a modest Kansas City law office into one of the nation's fastest-growing firms that convinced Russ Welsh to return home.

"I had two little kids, and D.C. was a tough place to raise a family on a government salary," the Polsinelli chair emeritus said of his days as a trial attorney for the civil division of the Justice Department. "And I wanted to be a trial lawyer in private practice."

Welsh spent 20 years as chairman and CEO at Polsinelli, which during his tenure grew from 90 to nearly 900 attorneys. The firm sprouted from a lone Kansas City location on the Plaza to a Top 100 firm with 21 offices across the country and national practices in financial services, health care (the country's largest), real estate, business law, intellectual property, labor and employment and litigation.

"We never envisioned we would have offices across the country and 850-plus lawyers, but we did envision that we could compete with larger firms by creating expertise," Welsh said of his early conversations with Dan Flanigan, then-chair of the firm's financial services practice, and business department chair Frank Ross.

His extensive civic involvement includes serving as chairman of the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, Starlight Theatre, United Way of Greater Kansas City and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Mid-America Chapter, as well as board positions with the

Civic Council of Greater Kansas City and the Kansas City Area Development Council, among others.

He remains on the boards of the United Way, Starlight and the Community Foundation of Greater Kansas City.

At Polsinelli, Welsh also chaired the firm's litigation department, with a focus on products liability, business torts, trade secrets and commercial and bankruptcy litigation. During his career, he served as local and regional counsel for Fortune 100 corporations, and he amassed extensive trial experience in products liability, business torts, trade secrets, and commercial and bankruptcy litigation. He's tried cases in 17 states and appeared in court in 33.

More than the firm's impressive growth, Welsh said he is most proud of his role in shaping a corporate culture larger than the sum of its parts.

"We've created an institutional legacy that has strength and values, and a culture that can continue to grow and be the foundation for continued success," he said.

Welsh, who turned 71 in July, retired in October 2018. Those two little kids, a son and daughter, are both in their early 40s, and like Dad, back home in the Kansas City area after moving away. The grandfather of three calls retirement "a transition."

"A lot of lawyers kind of wind down," he said. "In my case, I sort of shut it off like a switch at the end of my time. I'm getting comfortable with that, but it took some time."

"I miss the action, but mostly I miss the camaraderie."

— Alan Scher Zagier

**"We did envision that we could compete with larger firms by creating expertise."**





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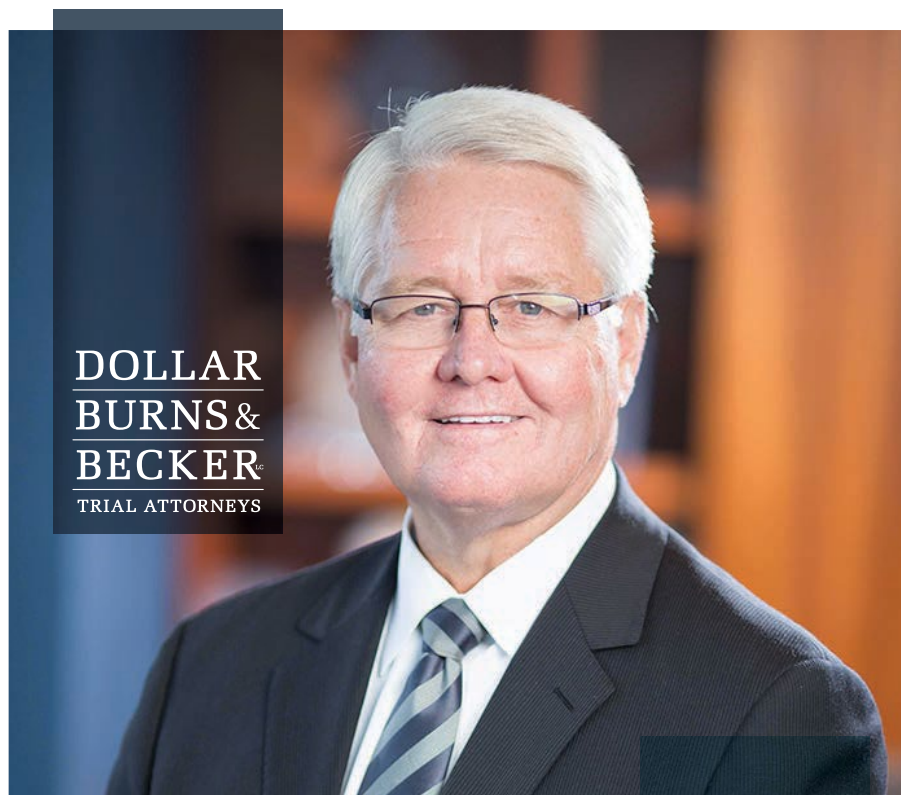


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