

A Pirate Looks at 40

By Jason P. Stoffel, Esq.

Ok, I have your attention. Although this article has nothing to do with the Jimmy Buffett song of the same name from 1974, it does coincide with “A Lawyer Looks at 40,” which will be the theme of this article. Every lawyer who has been practicing law for any substantial length of time certainly has work experiences and life experience that has made them a better attorney at this point in their career.

In March 2019, I was honored to be part of celebrating the legal careers of those local lawyers at the 40 Year Club Induction Ceremony & Luncheon held at the Smith Center for the Performing Arts.

This is one of my favorite Clark County Bar Luncheons of the year for a number of reasons. I will say that if there is anyone reading this article that has *not* attended this event in the past, make it a priority for 2020 to attend this annual event. The Honorary Master of Ceremonies was 1993 Clark County Bar President Dan Polsenberg. Dan does a wonderful job when he hosts this event. Hearing Dan do his comedic voice impersonations of some past United States presidents was a shining moment of the luncheon when he started this event. His President Reagan and President Clinton impersonations were spot on.

What is unique is most attorneys that had a chance to say a few words as the microphone was getting passed around all had a similar theme such as learning from mistakes and being the best attorney that they can be. Women practicing law are finally getting some equal

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respect that they deserve, but unfortunately, there is more of a lack of civility compared to practicing law in the late 1970s.

The program from the luncheon had some good biographical information about the inductees for the event, and many had good quotes. Without naming names, the common takeaway messages can be summed up in five messages:

1. Every client deserves your best effort.
2. Learn from our mistakes and that will lead to long term success.
3. Master your craft in the area of your practice.
4. Your reputation is based on your filings with the court.
5. A lawyer should always be professional, courteous, and kind.

Although this may seem like common sense, it really is reassuring to hear the experienced attorneys in our community give such words of wisdom. In conclusion, the practice of law is evolving, whether it be changes in law, modifications to the rules of civil procedure, case law updates, etc. It is a “practice,” but as they say, practice makes perfect. 🍀



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