By Jessica DePinto

As the 2015-16 term draws to a close and the Justinian Society of Lawyers’ 100th anniversary of its founding draws near, I began my term with gratitude for the past and an eye fixed on our future. The 2015-16 agenda was ambitious but with the support and guidance of our officers, members and our venerable, generous past presidents, we had an exciting year, marked by tradition and transition.

Like most current presidents whose term is drawing to a close, I am humbled by and extremely grateful for the dedication of our past presidents, who as Richard Caldarazzo joked, when the “Viking horn” sounds, come to the aid of the society. Indeed, they do! Whenever I called on any one of the past presidents for counsel or assistance, they provided unconditional support, encouragement, and levity.

The theme of the year was Engage, Educate and Enjoy. My objective was to engage and educate our junior members with the distinct hope that they will enjoy and preserve the kinship that has been the hallmark of our society for nearly a century. However, I also hope that they will make their mark as they navigate our society’s place in the twenty-first century.

I leave the Society in the very capable hands of 1st Vice President Frank Sommario, who consistently demonstrated his leadership throughout his entire tenure as an officer. We are also in a stable fiscal position, thanks to the stewardship of our officers, particularly, Natalie Petric, our current treasurer.

Engage (internal and external communities)

Led by website committee chair Michael Pisano, the Justinian Society has an updated website with a fresh face and new features that now allow members to update their profiles directly on the site. Thus, the new website has more interactive features to address the needs of our Millenial and future “digital native” members.

Membership co-chairs Nicole Petrarca and Anthony Pasquini led a team of law students from Kent, John Marshall and DePaul in a “Membership Drive” to update our membership database and reach out to former students and scholarship recipients who may have disengaged in their transition from student to professional. As of this writing, we have more than a 10% increase in the first-year lawyer category, with a slight increase in first-year lawyers.

We welcomed a new chapter, the Will County Justinian Society thanks to the efforts of 2nd Vice President, Michael Bonamarte and Will County member Gino Fibianti. Will County joins our other chapters in DuPage and Lake counties. This year, we extended our annual bocce tournament to our chapters and the joint meeting was held at Pinstripes in DuPage County. I
Letters to the Editor

By Katherine A. Amari O’Dell

Leonard,
Thank you very much. I am honored by the article.
- David T. Arena

Dear Leonard,
Grazie mille for including in the last Justinian newsletter the article about my June 2016 ISBA presidential installation. The newsletter was another outstanding issue and I was honored to have been included in it! I appreciate all the photos of colleagues and family who attended the event and that were included in the article. I am proud to continue to be a Justinian and proud to serve as the 139th ISBA president. I am pleased to share this honor with all of my fellow Justiniens who have been there to support me every step of the way. Siamo tutti davvero una famiglia!
- Umberto Davi

Dear Leonard,
Thank you for the masses for my sister. This past year she became active in the ISBA and really enjoyed it. She will be missed very much. Thank you for your support and prayers.
- Rick Felice

Katherine,
Thank you so much for sending me a copy of the Justinian’s newsletter. I really appreciate it and am honored to have been featured in your newsletter. Hope to see you soon!
- Jennifer P. Irmen

Leonard,
Magnificent! Well done and Bravo...not only for the quality of its content but also for its quantity (42 pages must be a record). Auguri!
- Richard Caifano

Dear Katherine,
Thank you so much for your kind words and a copy of the newsletter. What fun! It is my honor to be included in the Spring Edition. My best to all.
- Betty DeCarlo

Dear Katherine,
I just returned from my home in Naples, Florida. I received your letter and a copy of the Justinian Society News. I want to thank you for including me in this prestigious publication. It is comforting to know I have good friends like you, Leonard and John. I look forward to seeing all of you in the near future.
- Louis G. Apostol

Katherine,
Thank you for sending me the Justinian Society Newsletter. I am grateful for your kindness.
- Monsignor Velo

Dear Ms. O’Dell,
Just a note to thank you for sending me the Justinian Society Newsletter. I really appreciated receiving it. Please say hello to your father for me. Thanks again.
- Judge Anthony C. Kyriakopoulos

From left, Commissioner Michael Cabonargi, Katherine A. O’Dell, and Judge Anthony Kyriakopoulos

From left, Frank Sommario, Monsignor Velo, and Leonard F. Amari

Continued on page 3
Dear Katherine:

Thank you for including our joy, Luke’s birth, in the latest Justinian Newsletter. We are lucky to have friends like you. I look forward to showing the boys one day when they are older how loved they are.

- Jen (Pirok) Haase

Katherine,

I want to thank you very much for sending me a copy of the Justinian newsletter where I am mentioned. I feel honored to be mentioned in the newsletter and even more so that you went out of your way to send this to me because I am not sure I would have seen it if you hadn’t.

The Justinian Society is truly a family and even though I am not an attorney yet, I feel like I am a part of this family and could not be happier.

- Evan Davi

Thank you, Nina,

The (installation) event turned out very well and our guests were more than pleased. Fr. Belmonte’s thoughtful invocation began the evening on a positive and poetic note. The food was extraordinary for a downtown hotel event, and the service equally wonderful. (The waiter at our table, Danny, deserves notable kudos – he was most gracious). For the usual speeches, the presenters and awardees were mercifully brief and stimulatingly refreshing.

Standing out were Matt Dattilo’s well prepared presentation of Fr. Garanzini and then Fr. Garanzini’s own beautiful acknowledgement of gifts from his Italian American heritage and exhorting the current leadership to extend this heritage to our troubled world.

Thank you for your background work and organizing another grand evening.

- Father John Costello, S.J.

Dear Leonard,

I want to personally thank you and the Justinian Society and all of our friends who participated in contributing to the overall success of the Distinguished Professional Service Joint Dinner last Thursday evening.

It is our hope that the theme of the dinner will continue in the years to come. There are still many deserving individuals who should be recognized for their legal and public service contributions to our State and our legal community. And we do well to be reminded of all the wonderful things those individuals do. We will continue to encourage the collaboration of other organizations in sponsoring events such as this, in order to promote communication between the many important entities within the legal, academic, and public service arena. It was great to see so many students, young and established professionals, and pillars of our profession and our community come together.


Thank you,

- Umberto S. Davi, President, ISBA

How about being the first on your block to receive a Justinian desk flag by writing a check to the Justinian Scholarship Fund in the amount of $200, or more? With the sad condition of the economy, law students, especially folks from our community, are more in need of scholarship monies than ever. The Justinian Society, in fact, our ethnicity, is known for its generosity and concern for others.

Won’t you write your $200 check today to the Justinian Society Scholarship Fund? Send it to the Anthony Farace, scholarship chair, at our Justinian Headquarters, 734 N. Wells St., Chicago, IL 60654. You will immediately receive in the mail or by messenger, a mailing tube containing your Justinian desk flag.
Installation Dinner

By Anthony Pasquini

Each year the Justinian society of lawyers celebrates the changing of the guard. Sending off the previous year’s officers and welcoming the next group of leaders has become one of the most significant nights of the year for the society. As is tradition, the Justinian Society of Lawyers gathers at the Palmer House Hilton in downtown Chicago every September to celebrate their accomplishments and reflect on the further advancement of the organization. Lawyers from all over the Chicagoland area come together for this passing of the torch.

This year the Justinians have welcomed Jessica DePinto as the new president of our esteemed society. With appreciative sentiments for last year’s officers, goal oriented messages for the upcoming year, and inspiring commentary for the youth of the organization, DePinto accepted her position with enthusiasm, appreciation, and humility. Along with Jessica DePinto, Michael Bonamarte, Vincent Vidmer, Natalie Petric, and the Honorable Regina Scannicchio were all sworn in to their respective offices. During the swearing in ceremony an aura of eagerness, excitement, pride, and respect gleaned off of each officer.

The Installation Dinner in and of itself represents something far greater than I believe any one Justinian can truly understand. This night represents not only the history of the Justinian society of lawyers, but encapsulates the future. Year after year, the values of being a Justinian are renewed, and every year we are able to have presented to us a unique new message that most certainly hits home with everyone in attendance. The Installation Dinner has for many of us become much more than a swearing in of the new office, but has embodied a symbol of a family reunion or a returning to home. This night holds a special place in the hearts of each of our members. Giving the veterans a chance to look back at their own experiences, the current officers a chance to create their own legacy, and inspiring the newest members’ goals to strive for and surpass.

With open hearts and hungry minds members and guests alike enjoy an evening of excellent food and wine, prosperity, and family. I am sure there are countless more sentiments I am missing, and it is for that very reason why being a Justinian means so much to our members and why embracing the values our society holds makes it great. I am proud to say that this year’s Installation Dinner upheld the traditions and values set in

Remarks of Father Michael Garanzini, retiring President of Loyola University Chicago, upon receipt of being awarded the Justinian Society Award of Excellence
In Gratitude to the Justinian Society for this Honor

By: Michael J. Garanzini, S.J., Chancellor, LUS

I want to thank the Justinian Society for this magnificent honor. I am humbled by the honor bestowed on me, by the kind words of your new President, Jessica DePinto, and by the generous introduction from Matt Datillo.

Just yesterday, at Loyola University, we dedicated a new building for our Quinlan School of Business, Schreiber Hall. To offer some reflections on leadership, we invited General Colin Powell to be our honored guest. This American icon and public servant, whom Republicans and
Each month, Mr. Ginanino, our next because of a scholarship from the business did. I was able to attend a Jesuit University we would earn at least a portion and we

Many thanks to our law student volunteers at the Installation Dinner.

Democrats alike admire, shared with us the story of his own humble beginnings in Harlem, then the Bronx, then a fine high school and finally the ROTC (“that gave me the discipline I needed”) and finally a career in the Army, leading him into the very center of American power and responsibility. As he recounted the many blessing of his life, I began reflecting on my own, as I supposed all of us in attendance found ourselves doing.

I was born on the Hill in St. Louis, to wonderful parents. It is the kind of city neighborhood where people did not lock their doors at night. Their own parents were from the Old Country, as we called it. They gave the five of us children their time and energy and all the love any child could expect. They did not coddle us: they didn’t have time for that. My dad tended bar and worked in the restaurant. My mom monogrammed women’s dresses. They saved their money so that each of us could have health care and education. We all attended St. Ambrose Grade School and then a Catholic high school. Since they could not pay all these tuitions, it was expected that we would earn at least a portion and we did. I was able to attend a Jesuit University because of a scholarship from the business men of the Hill.

Each month, Mr. Ginanino, our next door neighbor, came over to collect our two dollars for property insurance and two dollars for health insurance. Dr. LoPiccolo was our physician and we saw him regularly for check-ups and whenever we needed. Sr. Benigna was our school principal, a firm disciplinarian whom even our parents respected (and feared). The Sisters who taught us, and the lay teachers as well, were Italian Americans. It was a complete world. It was a safe world. And it launched us kids into the mainstream of American life and culture, with a very heavy dose of pride for our Italian heritage. (Never forget where you are from, we were told time and again.)

So, I have been blessed, blessed especially to grow up as I did—with a loving family, in a safe environment, with health care and an excellent education, and one more thing. This entire neighborhood—of relatives, priests, Sisters, doctors and businessmen—gave us the gift of hope and ambition. They built a world together which said young people like me can succeed, can go to college, maybe even run one someday.

What I want to say to you here tonight—you who are all intelligent, accomplished professionals, gifted in many ways and embedded in this great Chicagoland community—is that we have too many children today, here in Chicago, who have very few of the gifts you and I were given. Too many children in Chicago do not have loving and supportive homes—for a variety of reasons. It doesn’t matter, the child I am speaking about did not deserve that fate. She or he happened by accident to be born into it. Too many children in Chicago do not have a decent education, or receive sufficient and necessary health care. Too many do not live in neighborhoods that are safe and secure. These kids spend their time anxious and in fear. No wonder they cannot learn, or have conditions like Asthma or are overweight.

If there is one thing I know from this upbringing I was blessed to have, it is that we have an obligation to pass on these gifts. The treasures we received cannot be kept to ourselves, or even simply passed down to our own children. This country allowed us to flourish. In a very short time, our Italian and first generation parents were able to participate fully in the American Dream. It is our responsibility to work so that all children can have these same gifts. We cannot pretend that this is someone else’s responsibility. We cannot lock our doors now.

By Antonia Kopec

As tradition would have it, on October 15, 2015, the Justinian Society gathered once more for its annual Scholarship Dinner for law student members. This year, the event was held at the Holiday Inn Mart Plaza in a lovely room with beautiful views of the Chicago skyline alongside the Chicago River, owned by longtime community leaders, Bob and Bud Cataldo. The Justinian Society of Lawyers Endowment Fund serves one of the most beneficial functions of the Justinian Society. Each year the Committee works very hard to provide scholarships to its law student members. This year, eleven scholarships were awarded in an excess of $50,000 including the law school matching funds. The scholarships are awarded to qualified law school applicants demonstrating need and scholarship, with an understanding of the importance and appreciation for their Italian ancestry.

With the cocktail hour beginning and members trickling in, I was quite excited to see so many familiar faces from last year’s event. As a law student, events like these are perfect ways to mingle and meet some of the finest attorneys in the area. There is so much we can learn from each other, but of course never enough time at these events.

As the night rolled along and everyone was settled in, we were ushered into the dining room to begin the award ceremony. Our current President, Jessica DePinto, wonderful leader and role model for us law students to emulate, began the ceremony with a warm introduction and recognition of our

Anthony Farace, scholarship chair, and Dion Davi at the scholarship dinner.

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gracious donors. Mr. Anthony Farace, a partner with Amari & Locallo, announced the award recipients. This year, scholarships were awarded to Antonia Kopec, Bobby Greene, Dominic LoVerde, James DiTommaso, Jennifer Divincenzo, Joseph Pellegrino, Karalyn Jevaney, Michael Bertucci, Michael Grieco, Tyler Duff, and Vincent Sebastinelli. These students are proud representatives of several Chicago area law schools including DePaul University College of Law, IIT Kent College of Law, Indiana University Maurer School of Law, John Marshall Law School, and Loyola University Chicago School of Law.

These awards would not be possible but for the generous donations to the Endowment Fund and the contributions from our very generous membership. In addition, a special thank you is in order for Jim Morici, Tom Battista, Lou Cairo, Steven Phillips, Antonio Romanucci and John Perconti, among others, who each individually sponsored scholarships. Of course, a special thank you to the Scholarship Selection Committee as well.

I had the pleasure of sharing my dinner with another scholarship recipient and several other student members. I myself am a Chicago native and I was pleasantly surprised to find myself surrounded by students who were originally from cities all across the country. It was clear to me how important the Justinian Society is bringing together students of Italian ancestry from across the country, and affording us all an opportunity to learn from and support one another. I especially enjoyed hearing the other students’ stories about studying abroad in Rome, the unpleasant experiences taking Roman public transportation, and traveling throughout Italy. Though we knew very little about each other, by the end of the evening it was clear what we all had in common; an appreciation for the Italian culture.

As a third year law student and recipient, I cannot stress enough how thankful and grateful I am to receive this award. (Especially having registered for bar prep the week prior). It is no secret that the cost of attendance and general law school “lifestyle,” becomes increasingly steeper each year. The scholarship provides a sense of security and reassurance that I have one less thing to worry about in already stress-filled environment. Additionally, the scholarship serves a reminder and encouragement to work hard to put myself in a position to be able to pay it forward in a few years.

“A return to first principles in a republic is sometimes caused by the simple virtues of one man. His good example has such an influence that the good men strive to imitate him, and the wicked are ashamed to lead a life so contrary to his example.” - Niccolo Machiavelli. It is important to remember the precedence this award sets for us all. As a recipient, I seriously cannot wait to be in a position to pay back what this scholarship has been able to provide me to someone in my situation. As donors, the example you set when making your contributions does not go unnoticed, and is sincerely appreciated by all who benefit from it.

[About the Author: Antonia Kopec is a 3L at DePaul University Law School and a young professional our Society will be hearing from and seeing a lot of in the years ahead.]
By Evan Davi

The meaningful and enjoyable tradition of the Past Presidents Mass and Dinner was celebrated this year on November 19, 2015. The annual Mass is the legacy of past President Judge Gloria Coco. The close-knit fellowship of students, young professionals, practicing attorneys, judges, and of course, the esteemed Justinian past presidents, was clearly apparent as all came together on a Thursday evening to attend Mass, break bread, reflect on the past, and simply enjoy each other’s company. It was an evening dedicated to recognizing the past leaders of the Justinian Society who, through their continued dedication and involvement, have both individually and collectively contributed to the development and continued success of the organization.

President DePinto renewed the original location for the Mass, which was previously set by past president Judge Gloria Coco, by having family and friends meet for an intimate mass at the Shrine of our Lady of Pompeii. The Mass was then followed by a traditional family dinner at Tu- fano’s in Vernon Park. The choice of location for the celebration served as a means of bringing the Justinians back to one of the Chicago neighborhoods that was at the center of the development and success of Chicago area Italian immigrants and the Justinian Society.

The Shrine of Our Lady of Pompeii is a center of hospitality and spiritual growth, founded in the Italian tradition and culture. The Shrine was founded at the turn of the century, when the influx and growth of the Italian Community of the near west side area of Chicago, was a challenge to all agencies involved in their care, help and development. Today, the Shrine stands as one of the centers of Italian American immigrant culture and is a testament to the enduring faith and love of tradition that are at the center of our community. Justinian Officer, Hon. Regina Scannicchio, serves as chairperson of the Board of Directors of The Shrine of Our Lady of Pompeii. She and other Justinians recited scripture during the Mass which made the experience even more meaningful for the group that gathered for the event.

Following the Mass was dinner at Tufano’s with a traditional and always delicious Italian dinner. After dinner, President DePinto began an informal program where, in advance, she had asked a few of the past presidents to be prepared to be called upon to answer a specific question posed by her, and perhaps share a brief, personal story of their past experiences with the Justinians over the years.

Being mindful of the time factor, President DePinto had only planned on having a select number of past presidents respond to her questions. However, in typical Italian fashion, almost double that amount ended up sharing or telling a quick story and raising a glass to our current President, past Presidents, and entire Justinian family. It was immediately apparent that all in attendance welcomed hearing from each and every past president and the personal comments he or she had to share. The group dialogue that followed was quite animated at times and certainly enjoyable and heartfelt. As the youngest person in attendance at this event, I could not help but be impressed by the wonderful camaraderie shared by such pillars of the legal profession. It was clear that they share a special bond and respect for one another.

It is moments like this that make the Justinian Society so special and helps new and incoming Justinians become more aware of the real significance of the organization and what it represents. It goes much further than being just another professional organization. The past leaders and members of this group truly care about the success and continued development of the Justinian Society. Many of the past leaders have risen high above their humble beginnings and are certainly proud of their Italian heritage. They have taken the time to work together outside of their individual legal professions and act as “family” over the years in promoting the Justinian Society’s on-going success as being one of the best organizations to network and meet the real leaders of the legal profession, academia, judges, and best recognized lawyers in the state.

President DePinto did an amazing job of organizing this event. She was joined by her fellow officers: 1st Vice President Frank A. Sommario, 2nd Vice President Michael F. Bonamarte IV, 3rd Vice President Vincent R. Vidmer, and Secretary Hon. Regina Scannicchio. It was an enjoyable evening for all.

An additional special tribute and gift was also presented by President DePinto to Richard Caifano for his recent Illinois State Bar Association recognition as a 2015 Distinguished Counsellor celebrating 50 years in the legal profession. Mr. Caifano is one of the past presidents who has repeatedly given back to the Justinian Society and has remained active year after year. He was appreciative of this recognition at the Past Presidents Dinner.

The Annual Past Presidents’ Mass and Dinner serves as a reminder that the strength and success of the Society stem from the cultural roots as immigrants.
On March 17, 2016, members of the legal community gathered at Quartino’s to celebrate not only St. Patrick’s Day, but also a very meaningful annual event for the Justinian Society, the Children’s Endowment Fund (CEF) Dinner. We were grateful to be joined by dear friends from the Advocates Society, an association of Polish-American lawyers.

The Justinian Society of Lawyers’ Endowment Fund, a separate legal entity and the charitable arm of the Justinian Society, is comprised of the Children’s Endowment Fund and Scholarship Fund. The annual CEF Dinner serves as a fundraiser for the CEF’s mission, to aid disabled and disadvantaged children. The CEF Dinner tradition began fourteen years ago, founded by past Justinian President Antonio Romannuci. Mr. Romannuci has continued to carry on this philanthropic event and serves as Chairperson of the CEF. The Foundation has since granted donations to the Illinois Eye Institute (providing glasses to disadvantaged children), Make-a-Wish Foundation (fulfilling a wish of a child battling from a life-threatening illness), Giant Steps (aiding a school for autistic children), and the Otis Wilson Foundation (hosting after-school programs for at-risk youth). At its inception the CEF had very modest funds, today Justinians are nearing having contributed almost $100,000!

This year alone we raised over $7,000 and the CEF aided two incredible organizations. The first was the Bear Necessities Foundation. Bear Necessities is a nationwide organization devoted to finding a cure to pediatric cancer and providing resources and hope to children struggling from the illness. Bear Necessities was founded by Kathleen Casey when her eight year old son, nicknamed “Bear”, was suffering from terminal kidney cancer. While fighting a brave battle of his own, Bear was always looking to help the other children who he saw struggling at the hospital. He asked his mother to help those children and of that request Bear Necessities was born. Bear’s sister, Courtney, attended the 2016 dinner and gave a heartwarming speech that brought many of our attendees to tears. Bear’s life may have been too short, but his kindness continues to live on, grow, and inspire each and every day.

The second organization aided at the 2016 Dinner was the Pro Bono Network (PBN). Since PBN’s inception in 2001, they have assisted more than two-hundred children by representing well over one-hundred incarcerated mothers with guardianship and related issues. Joining us at this year’s Dinner was Donna Peel, Executive Director of PBN. She was incredibly grateful for the Justinian’s spirit of giving and warm reception. Mrs. Peel commented that she initially expected to attend a formal business meeting, but found that when Justinians gather it feels more like a family reunion full of thanksgiving.

When sitting at a table with fellow Justinians, you will always feel at home. And like a family, Justinians are there to help those in need. The CEF is a testament to the spirit of giving and love that is embedded in the hearts of our generous family of members.
By Richard Caifano

The Evolution

It began with the concept that what we stand for as legal professionals of Italian Heritage was worth expanding. Those of us who were active in other organizations held respect for the fact that influence and recognition seemed to be governed in great part by the organization’s reach. And so, in 1976, under the presidency of Leonard Amari the concept of forming Justinian Chapters surrounding areas of Chicago where we might expect a positive reaction.

The concept preceded 1983 formation of the National Italian American Bar Association in New York and to this day is believed to be the first effort by any ethnic bar association at expansion.

There was no blueprint or format. It began before the information age and involved personal and phone contact with friends in areas of interest who might be receptive or who knew of others willing to join the effort. Throughout the process of personal contact, the one constant factor was the overwhelming feeling of pride in our heritage and culture encountered, without exception by those contacted.

DUPAGE COUNTY

Many Italian American families had moved from Chicago into the neighboring villages of DuPage County such as Addison, Elmhurst, Hinsdale and Oak Brook. And, among them were significant Legal professionals of Italian heritage. As reported by The DuPage Justinian Society, on November 8, 1976, the Honorable Anthony M. Peccarelli wrote to Alfred P. Bianucci, a member of the Chicago Society and a resident of DuPage County, and solicited his advice in forming a local chapter in Wheaton. The Chicago Society directed several of its members, Fred Lambruschi, Aldo E. Botti and Alfred P. Bianucci to meet with Anthony Peccarelli to pursue organizing the DuPage Chapter. Anthony Di Grazia, president of the Justinian Society of Lawyers in Chicago then approached the board of directors and suggested a formal authorization to establish a DuPage chapter. The Justinian Society of Lawyers in Chicago issued a Charter to establish a DuPage Chapter on May 23, 1977. On October 28, 1977 an organizational meeting was held in Mr. Botti’s library with approximately twenty-five lawyers present. Officers were selected: Anthony Peccarelli, Temporary Chairman; Hon. John Panagasser, Temporary Secretary; and Karen LaMont, Temporary Treasurer. A committee chaired by Victor J. Cassato, Joe Lamonica and Aldo Botti were appointed to draft bylaws. Since its formation, the DuPage Chapter has been actively involved in advancing the interests of its members and in mentoring younger Italian American students and lawyers. The Justinian Cancer Ball is held in the fall of each year to raise funds for cancer research in honor of Ken Vincolese, one of the first members of the DuPage Justinians who left us too early but whose memory instills energy to those annually involved in the success of Cancer Ball.

WISCONSIN

Having attended undergraduate studies at Marquette University, I fortunate to befriend lifelong friends who later become pillars of the Italian American legal community in Milwaukee. The expression small world applies when all it took was a visit to Milwaukee for lunch with Brothers Joe and John Balistreri and their cousin Peter to come away with sufficient interest and initiates to form the Wisconsin chapter of the Justinian Society of Lawyers. From the time we had become Justinian’s, the late and unforgettable John Alioto and often mentioned to the Balistreris the networking and mentoring opportunities afforded by the Society. The Aliotos and Balistreris are cousins, a relationship that didn’t hurt the formation of the Wisconsin Chapter. Today, John’s brother Joe Alioto is the president of the Wisconsin Justinian Society that is now fully integrated into the Wisconsin Bar Association. Over the years Joe Alioto has done much to maintain the spirit that defines our society term; among his most successful is the Wisconsin Justinian Seminar in the Sun, a CLE program hosted each May in Las Vegas with actual lectures given on topics of interest by distinguished Judges, professors and members of the legal community throughout our Nation.

LAKE COUNTY

Len Amari was instrumental in the formation of the Lake county chapter of the Justinian Society of Lawyers because he had a friend by the name of Ben Ori, his JMLS classmate, and died shortly after this chapter’s creation. Ori, a name that has served our brothers and sisters to the North with distinction. With the continuing interest and motivation offered by members such as Justice Mary Seminara-Schostok and Michael Ori, Ben’s son, the Lake county chapter continues to thrive and distinguished by its annual Christmas gathering.

Will County

AND IN 2015…

…our Chicago Justinian vice president Michael Bonamarte reached out to Len Amari and me just this past year to inform us that there were a good number of active Italian American legal professionals interested in forming a Justinian chapter in Will County. After a brief primer on the by-laws of the Society and how we had done Chapters in the old days, Mike met with that group, who met with our people last November and in January of this year, our Executive committee approved with pride the formation of the Will County chapter of the Justinian Society of Lawyers.

[Editor’s Note: Because of his great modesty, Brother Richard Caifano won’t take credit for the concept of creating Justinian Chapters – along with hard work in implementation by Sam Tornatore, the late Judge Tony Scotillo, Jack Cerone, and others.]
Enduring Traditions in a New Venue

By: Jessica DePinto

The February meeting is traditionally dedicated to the Justinian Society bocce tournament. Friends and colleagues who may not appear at any other meeting make the pilgrimage to play the game of their grandfathers, fathers and uncles. We were delighted to welcome Carmen Forte (bocce tournament regular) even as his family are awaiting the birth of his first born child. This year, in keeping with the theme of “Educate Engage and Enjoy,” we reached out to our sister chapters in DuPage, Lake and our most recent chapter in Will County to engage in a “friendly” game of bocce in a venue fairly accessible to all chapters.

Fifty-seven Justinians from all chapters and generations were present. Past presidents Richard Caldarazzo, Len DeFranco, Antonio Romanucci, and Judge Lisa Marino, and bocce meeting aficionado Sam Canizzaro were joined by new member Rosella DeAstis and students from DePaul, Kent and John Marshall. Cook County Justinian Society President Jessica DePinto and 1st VP Frank Sommario joined DuPage County Justinian Society President Elizabeth Pope, 1st VP Angie Alioto, incoming Secretary Mario Palermo, and past president Dion Davi to welcome their respective constituents.

While the venue was new (Pinstripes in OakBrook), the competitive spirit and reverence for the game transcended time and place. Nine teams competed in total. Stalwart players Judge Joseph Cataldo, Carmen Forte, Frank Anselmo and Nick Giordano secured second place in the tournament after competing successfully in the previous games.

Fate (or Pinstripes) selected the championship team comprised of Cook (newlyweds Mike Pisano and Nicole Petrarca) and DuPage members (Fred Spitzzeri and Sam Orticelli). Champion player and past DuPage president Fred Spitzzeri had dedicated the game to his beloved dad and teammate, the late Fred Spitzzeri. Fred commented that he and his dad played together for twenty-years and the coveted championship status had eluded them, until now.

The evening serendipitously played out in the style of the late, great Sicilian-American director, Frank Capra. The aspects of the evening which the human hand controls may have raised a few eyebrows as fragrantly defying tradition (venue, menu, no prizes). Yet, that which relies on a bit of providential nudging plays out in the most traditional of ways and is embodied in the championship team composition: collaboration among chapters (Cook and DuPage), a new victorious “partnership” for husband-wife teammates (Mike and Nicole), and a son’s victory dedicated to the memory of the father and teammate that guided and has gone before him.

Lake County

Michael J. Ori’s 2nd President’s Message

I was standing with my wife and son in the back of a crowded Church one Sunday when I noticed that my son, who was about 3 years old at the time, had struck up a conversation with another little boy about the same age. That boy’s father was standing next to my wife and me in the back of the room. While attempting to listen to the service, I briefly caught the substance of the conversation my son was having, as did the other boy’s father.

The little boy, at one point, reached over to my son’s head and began feeling his hair and then said, “what is your hair?”; “it’s funny”, as he ran his fingers through my son’s curls. I glanced at the boy’s father who now had a look of terror on his face as he had been listening in on the conversation as well, apprehending what his son would say next. At that moment, my son reached up and began feeling his own hair and said, with a smile on his face, “it’s nice.” The other boy quickly agreed and then began feeling his own straight, blonde hair and said “so’s mine” and my son agreed. The two then went on playing. The father of the boy smiled at me and I nodded.

My children are bi-racial. My children are Italian-African-Native American. My children are children, just like I was and just like your children. People say that our children are growing up in a time where they don’t see color. I don’t agree. Our children see color, the difference most of the time is that when seeing that color, they are being taught to celebrate that difference, not fear it. However, even though it seems a majority of us agree that a celebration of diversity is not only right, but nec-

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necessary, we are reminded on an almost daily basis of the hatred that still exists in this world; in this country and in our own communities.

Last month, a gunman walked into a church in South Carolina and killed 9 people. The gunman was white and the victims were black. The shooter allegedly said that “blacks were taking over the world and someone needed to do something about it for the white race”. In April in Huntington, West Virginia, a member of the Marshall University Football team was arrested after allegedly exiting a vehicle after seeing a same sex couple walking down the street, shouting anti-gay slurs at them and then beating the two men whom he saw kiss while walking down the street.

Those are two examples of what is an ongoing problem in this country. Last month the LCBA welcomed Justice Michael Hyman of the 1st District Appellate Court to present his seminar entitled “A Dialogue on Justice and Privilege”. The event was extremely well attended and though the topic was difficult to discuss at times; the message was made clear: Privilege exists. Discrimination exists. Hate exists. However, we are a group of people uniquely qualified and situated to not only discuss these issues, but to do something about them. We are lawyers. Many of us became lawyers because of our sense of justice – our need for justice. Hate is an impediment to that justice we all crave. Dr. Martin Luther King delivered his annual address to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference on August 16, 1967 where he said:

“I'm concerned about a better world. I'm concerned about justice; I'm concerned about brotherhood; I'm concerned about truth. And when one is concerned about that, he can never advocate violence. For through violence you may murder a murderer, but you can't murder murder. Through violence you may murder a liar, but you can't establish truth. Through violence you may murder a hater, but you can't murder hate through violence. Darkness cannot put out darkness; only light can do that. And I say to you, I have also decided to stick with love, for I know that love is ultimately the only answer to mankind's problems. And I say to myself that hate is too great a burden to bear.”

The LCBA through its Diversity and Community Outreach Committees will continue these discussions inspired by great thinkers like Dr. King. Our discussions of Diversity will not be intended to make anyone uncomfortable; though that may be a symptom of some discussions. Our intention will be to bring to the forefront of this great Association the need to continue a dialogue; to learn; to come together. After all, as Tennessee Williams once said “I think that hate is a feeling that can only exist where there is no understanding”.

Lake, continued from page 10

Michael Ori and his wife, Tara.

Newsletter Contributors:
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Newsletter Staff:

Interested in becoming a staff member/contributor to our highly regarded semi-annual newsletter?

The only responsibility is to attend society functions and submit articles for publications, and maybe take photos of the event being attended.

Incoming President Frank Sommario is in the process of making Justinian committee appointments.

This is a wonderful opportunity for networking, increasing one’s persona in the legal community and have a head shot published with submissions.

If interested, contact us at Justinians@navandassoc.com

Michael Ori with his family (mom Toni), Katherine A. O'Dell and Leonard F. Amari
By Janet Davi

For the first time, four significant legal organizations joined together to honor three distinguished award recipients for their exemplary service to the legal profession and the public of the State of Illinois. The Illinois State Bar Association, The Illinois Judges Association, The John Marshall Law School, and The Justinian Society of Lawyers hosted a joint dinner at The Standard Club on February 25, 2016. The award recipients were the Honorable Rita Garman, Chief Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court, the Hon. Jesse White, Illinois Secretary of State, and Susan Sher, Esq., Senior Advisor to the University of Chicago President and former White House Chief of Staff to Michelle Obama.

It was an exciting evening as the many attendees associated with each organization came together to honor these individuals at this inaugural dinner event. Students, young professionals, established professionals, and many other pillars of our community were in attendance. The list is too numerous to mention individually, however, all who attended helped make this event extra special.

The Program Sponsor was Attorneys’ Title Guaranty Fund Inc. and the Wine Sponsor was the ISBA Mutual Insurance Company. These sponsors along with several dinner table sponsors contributed greatly to the event’s success. The dinner table sponsors included Amari & Locallo, Susan Sher Family & Friends, Illinois Judges Association, Johnson & Bell Ltd., Salvi, Schostok & Pritchard P.C., The John Marshall Law School, and Burke Wise Morrissey & Kaveny, LLC. Supreme Court Justices Hon. Anne M. Burke and Hon. Mary Jane Theis were also in attendance. Numerous Judges, JMLS Dean John E. Corkery, JMLS President Leonard F. Amari, and Alderman Edward Burke also attended.

The four organizations who hosted the event were represented by their respective leaders: Umberto Davi, President of the Illinois State Bar Association, Hon. Robert Anderson, President of the Illinois Judges Association, Jessica O’Brien, Trustee of the John Marshall Law School, and Jessica DePinto, President of the Justinian Society of Lawyers. These leaders introduced and provided background for the audience about each of their respective award recipients.

The remarks presented by each honoree were both interesting and inspiring. It was clearly apparent by their words, stories, and the information they shared that all award recipients were more than deserving of this recognition. It is ISBA President Umberto Davi’s hope that the theme of this inaugural dinner will continue in the years to come. According to Davi: “There are so many deserving individuals that should be recognized for their legal and public service contributions to our State of Illinois and our legal community. It is important to take the time to recognize and remind others, particularly our young professionals, of all the wonderful things these individuals do. We will continue to encourage the collaboration of various organizations in sponsoring events such as this, in order to continue to promote communication between the many important entities in the legal, academic, and public service arena. Organizing this dinner was a long time in the making and I appreciate the cooperation of my fellow colleagues, and it was great to see the end result. The ISBA staff was instrumental in coordinating every detail and I want to thank everyone who participated. I especially want to thank Leonard Amari and all my fellow Justinians for their ongoing support. The Justinians who attended this event (photo below) helped to make it a success and I sincerely thank each and every one of you – Molto Grazie!”
DePinto

By Katherine A. O’Dell

Justinian Secretary Judge Regina Scannicchio received the prestigious John Marshall Law School Board of Trustees’ Spirit Award on, June 5, 2015 at JMLS.

Leonard F. Amari, president of the Board of Trustees, presented the award to Judge Scannicchio and made the following remarks during the introduction: “Regina, your service to John Marshall as the immediate past president of the Alumni Association Board is but one example of your dedication to the people and places closest to your heart. In a graceful and powerful way, you have integrated your work, your passion and your heritage, bringing together the best of the best in your world. Your commitment to your Italian heritage is demonstrated by your active involvement in both the Justinian Society and the Sons of Italy, receiving the prestigious Community Leadership Award at the 2012 Sons of Italy Di Vinci gala. As a proud alumnus of DePaul and active member of the shine of our Lady of Pompeii, you once again bring your vision and leadership to the table for the benefit of your faith. And at John Marshall, we see your leadership, vision and dedication at work in a variety of ways. You mentor students, making sure that they realize that professionalism is of paramount importance. While leading the Alumni Association, you were not satisfied to lead for just one year, you looked long term and started a strategic plan process. You are an advocate for the school, the alumni and the students. You are a woman of your word and a person of honor. Your dedication to the law is unmatched only by your dedication to your family, your heritage and your church. Regina, I know the prize you really long for is the opportunity to hold the Stanley Cup. . .but we hope this will suffice. It is my privilege to present you with the 2015 Spirit Award.”

SACA Announces Officers

By Leonard F. Amari

We report regularly in these pages of the activities of the Sicilian American Cultural Association (SACA) because many of our members are so active, both in is creation and ongoing success. The 20 year old entity announces its 2016-2017 officers, elected at its regular meeting of its Board of Directors. Succeeding as President of the wonderful year of prominent real estate tax attorney Katherine A. O’Dell, a career and beloved Justinian and past President, is long time member and director, Rose Mary Pagano; retired Circuit Court judge, also a past Society president, Gloria Coco, 1st V.P.; continuing on as treasurer is Dino Porto, founding member; and as secretary, Martha Monastero. All were elected by unanimous vote.

Our esteemed past Justinian president Alfred E. Gallo was the moving force behind the creation of SACA, along with Justinians Dom Fichera, retired Judge Frank Orlando and the late members Justice Tony Scariano, Emil Venuti, Judge Nello Gamberdino, to mention just a few. Ms. Pagano, the new president, assumed her responsibilities after the first of the year. “Following the esteemed Katherine O’Dell (nee Amari) in this role will be very difficult, she kept us on track of our mission statement, promoted our usual and successful cultural events, with some innovative ideas and programs,” says retired Judge Gloria Coco. She has served through all the chairs of the association before assuming its presidency.

SACA was incorporated in the State of Illinois on September 8, 1994, by a handful of proud Sicilians, leaders in their professions and in our ethnic community and all highly respected, Dino Porto, Alfred E. Gallo, Vincent Inserra, the brothers Joseph and Salvi Monastero, Sr., and the Justinians mentioned above. SACA’s mission has and continues to be to support, publicize and promote a greater public awareness of, and interest in Sicily, its art, history, traditions, culture and its people, and to increase the mutual understanding and friendship of its members and others.

It was the avowed purpose of these altruistic community leaders that SACA’s only mission was cultural and eleemosynary and with the only motivation to enhance the Sicilian experience. Since its inception SACA has worked very hard to demonstrate how much Sicily has contributed to the world culturally.

SACA also has an eleemosynary agenda, making charitable contributions. Just a few of the beneficiaries include Loyola University Chicago (the Italian Studies program, spearheaded by Prof. Dominic Candeloro), scholarship funds at The John Marshall Law School in Chicago, and sending $1,000.00 each year to the Franciscan outreach program, to feed the hungry.

SACA also sponsored a Champagne Brunch honoring all the then Italian American Appellate Court Justices in Illinois, highlighting the significant career of the first ever Italian American Illinois Supreme Court Justice, Moses W. Harrison, II (his mother’s maiden name was Darfado). Until his passing a few years back, Justice Harrison always said the SACA award was one of the most appreciated of all the recognitions and awards of his distinguished career.

Another example of SACA events and activities is a spectacular program entitled “Impressions of Sicily.” This included Paul Simon, former US Senator from Illinois; Abner Mikva, former Justice of the US Court of Appeals and Anthony Scaria-no, former Justice of the Illinois Appellate

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Court and their wives. They all had visited Sicily and they shared their experiences to this fun-filled and historic island of the sun.

In 2001, SACA celebrated the distinguished careers of Italian-American past presidents of the 37,000 member Illinois State Bar Association, including this writer, Cheryl (Ippolito) Niro and the late Ralph Gabric, Michael Coccia, and Larry Pusateri.

Annually, this wonderful organization sponsors a Medal of Merit brunch in the fall, honoring various community leaders, contributors and folks of repute. The social events are usually held at the wonderful Monastero’s restaurant (3935 W. Devon Ave., Chicago, IL), that serves magnificent food in tasteful ethnic surroundings – Sicilian, of course. Honored over the years were leading lawyers and judges, successful businessmen and entrepreneurs, actors, a Consul General of Italy, Presidents of universities and law schools, and from time to time, the folks that aren’t well known on a broader scale, but are to the leaders of our organizations, the folks that do all the work to make the rest of us look better. Along with this this article are a potpourri of brunch photos taken over the years, almost all of the honorees recognizable to us.

SACA’s agenda for the remainder of the year promises to be an exciting one. They meet about ten times a year for a monthly dinner meeting at beautiful Monastero’s in Chicago (Joe Monastero always plans a special Sicilian meal), which has long been the home of SACA. The dinner meetings are steeped in Sicilian/Italian culture and music. The dinners are open to all, not just members, and at very reasonable prices, usually well below market. They are educational and entertaining and the food prepared by the Monasteros is exceptional. Everyone is invited to attend. SACA membership is open to all persons of good reputation, regardless of culture, origins or ethnic backgrounds, provided they are dedicated to the same principles, goals and objectives as embraced by SACA. For events, details or for membership information, contact SACA secretary Martha Monastero at belcantojo@aol.com or 773-588-2515.

By ISBA President Umberto Davi

Umberto Davi and First Lady Jan Davi

I first joined the Justinian Society of Lawyers and the Illinois State Bar Association (ISBA) in 1982, as a new lawyer and at the suggestion of Leonard Amari. I am extremely grateful to Leonard for this advice because my involvement to this day continues to be a rewarding experience for me both personally and professionally.

It has now been eight months since I was sworn in as the 139th President of the ISBA and I have been continuously engaged since then with a full agenda of programs and appearances. My efforts on behalf of ISBA members have been devoted to promoting positive change for our legal profession. Below is an update of my Presidency thus far.

Proposed Amendment to Rule 711

is my main initiative this year. The newly formed Special Task Force on Rule 711, chaired by the Honorable Michael Chmiel, has made significant progress. The Committee’s objective was to expand 711 limited law licenses to allow qualified law students to intern for private firms; this should help a greater number of students gain practical experience by working more directly with clients and also appear in court. Currently, under subsection (b) of the rule, only law students externing under the supervision of a legal aid organization, office of the public defender, or law office of the State are eligible to apply for a 711 limited law license. I am pleased to report that the Rule 711 Committee’s six-month plan resulted in unanimous approval of their proposal by the ISBA Board of Governors and the Assembly at the Midyear Meeting, in December, 2015. A Petition to the Supreme Court is currently being prepared requesting approval of the proposed amendment. Please refer to Committee member Marie Sarantakis’ article in this Newsletter for further details.

The Solo and Small Firm Practice Institute is another program I committed to continue supporting during my term. The newly formatted program is in its second year and was initially implemented under Rick Felice’s presidency. The goal was to reach lawyers across the state of Illinois and assist them in all areas of their law practice by bringing CLE to them. There has been a strong positive response from our membership. Below you will find the schedule of Practice Institutes for 2015-2016:

March 11, 2016 - Bloomington, IL (Holiday Inn & Suites)

June 16, 2016 - Rosemont, IL (The Westin O’Hare)

The Impact of Law School Debt on the Delivery of Legal Services is an increasingly alarming phenomenon. Last year a special task force was formed to research and address this concern. Recently, Justice Anne Jorgensen (Co-Chair of the Task Force with Dennis Orsey) presented the Committee’s findings and recommendations to the ISBA Board of Governors and to the Assembly at the Midyear Meeting. The Task Force’s eighty-eight page report was overwhelmingly approved by both governing bodies. As a result, I have sent letters to all Illinois law school deans asking them to attend a meeting on March 3, 2016 to discuss how to better address the issues noted in the report.

Civics Education is another topic which has come to the forefront in recent years, due to a state-wide mandate for Illinois high schools to add civics education core course requirements to their curriculum by 2017. The Illinois Judges Association is collaborating with the ISBA to provide accessible community services to the general public on this topic. The Standing Committee on
Law Related Education for the Public and its Civics Education Subcommittee continues its mission in creating programs such as Bringing the Courtroom to the Classroom and Bringing the Courtroom to the Boardroom. Access to guest speakers and programs on Civics Education are available to any individual or organization through the ISBA. Free resources are available through the ISBA (www.isba.org/teachers), Supreme Court of Illinois (www.state.il.us/court), and Illinois Judges Association (www.ija.org). We continue to make our state a better place through education. The 34th Annual Illinois State Bar Association High School Mock Trial Invitational is scheduled for April 2-3, 2016 at the University of Illinois College of Law.

A few inaugural Special Events have taken place during my presidency and it has been my privilege and honor to attend a wide variety of statewide functions. I have addressed numerous organizations on behalf of the ISBA and I have met many new and wonderful lawyers and Judges throughout the state. One such special event I am especially proud of was the Joint Board of Governors meeting with the State Bar of Wisconsin. This was held in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin on September 24-26, 2016. It was an interesting, enjoyable, and successful event as lawyers from both states came together to discuss, compare, and brainstorm about the current issues facing every lawyer and bar organization regarding the changing landscape of the legal profession.

Another inaugural special event of my year, which I hope many of you are able to attend, is the Distinguished Professional Services Joint Dinner on February 25, 2015, at the Standard Club in Chicago. Four significant organizations, the ISBA, the Illinois Judges Association, The John Marshall Law School, and The Justinian Society of Lawyers have come together to honor three pillars of the community and the legal profession. The distinguished award recipients are Chief Justice Rita Garman of the Illinois Supreme Court, Jesse White, the Illinois Secretary of State, and Susan Sher, Senior Advisor to the University of Chicago President and former Chief of Staff to First Lady Michelle Obama. Collectively, these award recipients have contributed over 100 years to making the state of Illinois a better place to live in.

An additional event is jointly being planned with the DuPage County Bar Association. “A Day at the Races” will be held in April with details to follow. Lastly, the ISBA Annual Meeting will be held June 16-18, 2016 at The Westin O’Hare in Rosemont and we will be there to welcome Vince Cornelius as the 140th President of the ISBA.

Nominations for ISBA 3rd Vice President closed on January 31, 2016. Two candidates, David Sosin and Stephen Komie, will be on the ballot and the winner will rise through the ranks to become the ISBA President in 2020. The final voting for all positions, including those running for a seat on the Board of Governors and the Assembly, will close on Friday, April 29th, 2016 at 4:30 p.m.

We have many other exciting programs in the works, of which I will report in future columns. For now, I strongly encourage every Illinois lawyer to become an ISBA member and get involved in one way or another. Becoming active with our various Bar Associations has greatly enhanced my personal and professional life and I believe it will do the same for you.

[Editor’s Note: Brother Umberto had a wonderful year, was a credit to the profession and the organized bar – and made the rest of us Justinians proud with his charismatic leadership. He follows in the footsteps of eight previous Justinian presidents who were elected statewide to lead the 32,000 member ISBA. Auguri, fratello.]
Wow, what a year. Every time that I have an opportunity to write a column of behalf of the Justinian Society Student Chapter at John Marshall I am at a loss for words because my participation in this organization is so important to me. When I was elected President last year, I saw it as a chance to build and maintain relationships in such a wonderful organization. The student members and the attorneys within the Society are really like my family. There is no better way to explain it. I have been blessed to have many great friends and role models in my life that I cannot begin to thank them all.

First, thank you to Jessica DePinto. Over the summer, when I was starting my “term” as President, I was able to meet with Jessica in person at Pegasus in Greektown. For those who know me well, I am a very outgoing person but, I also get nervous about meeting people, particularly in more professional settings. After speaking with Jessica, it was as if I had known her my entire life. Since then, she has been a great resource for me. I am truly grateful for her advice. Next, I would like to thank Leonard Amari. Without his guidance and mentoring program, I would not have been successful at John Marshall. In fact, like most law students, at one point, I was positive that I was going to fail out of law school. I didn’t. Not only does he help many students attend law school who would not have the ability to otherwise do so, he inspires students once they start law school. It is not a coincidence that the students he helps end up doing very well. Through that group, I met many friends who helped me both academically and emotionally—Tyler Duff, Mark McQueary, Mirko Akrap, Chris Sweeney, Peg Flisk, Denis Cahill, Tino Mirabelli, Tom Laser, Eric Vincent, and Kevin Klione. I am excited to see the success that we will have in these upcoming years. Also, I would like to thank some recent John Marshall alumni—Anthony Pasquini, Nicole Petrarca, Michael Pisano and Chris McCleary. Anthony and Nicole were my mentoring chairs and since then, I have really valued their advice as I start my career. Finally, we had some amazing panelists at John Marshall in the fall—Michael Favia, Christopher Cali, Celia Gamrath, Lindsey Carpino, Leonard Amari, Jessica DePinto and Anthony Pasquini. Come back anytime!

Thank you to the members of the Executive Board this year. The 2015-2016 Executive Board of the John Marshall Law School Justinian Society Student Chapter consisted of President Karalyn Jevaney, Vice President Daria Vasilescu, Secretary Bobby Green, Treasurer Joe Sgro, Social Chair Anthony Pontillo and Philanthropy Chair Matthew Custardo. I am lucky to call many of you my friends and I know that you will be very successful! Additionally, thanks to Domenica Manfredini, Bianca Ciarroni, Deidre Davis, Kristen Sapyta, Dominic Erbacci, Danielle Monahan, Lari Dirks, Reema Paracha, Kimberly Bartoszewski, Amanda Busljeta, Meggie Chambers and the rest of the volunteers at many of our events. I know that I was not able to remember everyone so we appreciate your help.

I would also like to thank last year’s leadership—Marie Sarantakis and Maria Salerno. Marie— I am very glad that we met as you are the person that I turn to with any question. I still cannot figure out how you manage everything on your plate but, you do so with such grace and poise. It has been an honor to take over all the hard work that you put into the Student Chapter last year. Mara- you are an incredibly caring and compassionate person. I really appreciate your insistence that I get involved more in the Society. Finally, thank you to Diana Bosnjak for her hard work in putting together this newsletter. It’s been a great year and an honor to serve as your President!
Exciting New Year on Campus

By Caitlin Galasso

Since the reinstatement of DePaul University’s Justinian Society Student Chapter, members have enjoyed an exciting year of events with fellow students and Parent Society members alike. DePaul Justians have seized the opportunity to reconnect with their Italian roots and share in a community that truly resonates with them.

In September, members attended a pre-release viewing of Steven Spielberg’s “Bridge of Spies” movie in River North. It was an entertaining night which brought members together to see an enthralling and spine-tingling thriller.

In October, DePaul’s Justinian Society Chapter hosted a Halloween Party with fellow student organizations: the Latino Law Students Association, the Black Law Students Association, Outlaws and the Asian Pacific American Law Students Association. The night was complete with a DJ and costume prizes. The event was a great success and fun opportunity for Justians to meet and mingle with fellow law students.

During the holiday season, members of the society volunteered to serve as pen pals with third grade students at McCormick Elementary School in Chicago. This partnership helped to improve the students’ reading and writing skills. The experience was a great way for Justinian members to give back to the community and spread a little holiday cheer before heading home to cook up their Italian Christmas feasts!

In March, members look forward to welcoming Cook County Commissioner and fellow Justinian Society of Lawyers member Peter Silvestri to speak. Mr. Silvestri will be discussing his success as a Justinian and DePaul University alumnus. The Chapter would love for more Justians to attend, and extends an invitation to all members of the Parent Society.

Over the past year, DePaul University’s law school community has enjoyed the revival of this wonderful and newly blossoming student organization. We hope to host even more exciting events, including a cocktail reception in the Spring at a date to be determined. Thank you to the Parent Society for all of their help and support. The Justinian Society of DePaul is pleased to be a part of this incredible society and look forward to expanding even more in the upcoming year.

A Message from the DePaul Chapter President

By Adriana Preston

I have had the pleasure as serving as the Justinian Society DePaul Student Chapter President this past year. After reviving the Justinian Chapter at DePaul last year, we focused on establishing the Chapter on campus. We were able to double the amount of events we hosted on campus, as compared to last year. We are delighted to have a blossoming chapter, with our membership continuing to grow. Despite all members of e-board graduating this year, I am proud to say the club is well established and will continue to remain on campus.

I am thankful for the two years I have served as President for the DePaul Student Chapter. I was given the opportunity to meet many influential individuals that I now call friends and mentors. In addition to meeting members of the Justinian Society of Lawyers I am thankful for the bonds I have created with fellow members at DePaul, I have made friendships that will last a lifetime. The Justinian Society has routinely made friendships that will remain with me as I continue along my career path. I am grateful for the opportunities the Justinian Society has provided throughout my time as a law student at DePaul.

Meatball Madness

On Monday March 28, The Justinian Society at the John Marshall Law School hosted Meatball Madness. The event was very popular this year and the food was delicious. It was so popular that at one point we ran out of plates! This year, we wanted to expand the event to include vegetarian meatballs and halal meatballs to involve more students at the law school. We collaborated with the Middle Eastern Law Student Association in order to do so. Congratulations to the winners- First Place: Domenica Manfredini, Second Place: Tmara Abidalrahim, President of Middle Eastern Law Student Association, and Third Place: Karalyn Jevaney (Carol Baumel, my grandma, made the meatballs) Thank you to this year’s Board for all their hard work: Vice President Daria Vasilcescu, Treasurer Joe Sgro, Secretary Bobby Greene, Social Chair Anthony Pontillo, and Philanthropy Chair Matthew Custardo. Also, a sincere thank you to my family who helped to plan the event and run last minute errands. It was an evening to remember!

From left: Mark Wojcik, Jessica DePinto, Anthony Cuda, Anthony Cuda Jr., Karalyn Jevaney, Cristina Favia, Michael Favia, Dominic Erbacci

From left: John Lag, President Jessica DePinto, Mark Wojcik, Marie Sarantakis, Cristina Favia, and her dad, past President Michael Favia
By: Dustin J. Siebert
[Reprinted with permission from Leading Lawyers.]

To develop a better understand of Joseph B. Brocato’s approach to practicing law, one need look no further than his other hat: that of an inspirational book author.

During a visit to a family vacation home in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, a few years back, Brocato was watching his four young children frolicking in the water at a nearby waterpark, smiles on their faces. As he looked over the top of his work laptop, he had an intense emotional experience.

“Something came over me — I wanted them to be happy like that for the rest of their lives,” he says.

The visual - and the sentiment - motivated Brocato to start jotting down thoughts, ideas and words of wisdom. When he showed it to his wife, Kathleen, she encouraged him to keep writing. Eventually, he produced 30 pages that he read to his children and shared with his friends.

Brocato insists the writing was never meant to become the seeds for his third published book, but that’s just what happened: happy is cool most closely aligns with his personal approach to life and his career.

Forged in Suburban Berwyn

Raised in Berwyn, Brocato’s earliest career influences came from his surroundings as a child. His father, the late Ben Brocato, was an immigrant from Sicily. A manufacturing engineer who founded and operated his own machine tool sales business, he also served his community as an alderman in Berwyn. He passed away in 2007 during his third elected term.

Interestingly, Brocato was also heavily influenced via a discipline quite disparate from practicing law: He served as drummer for the band Berwyn Jazz from eighth grade through his sophomore year of college and was the band’s “manager” of sorts for a time.

It was while majoring in economics at Loyola University Chicago that Brocato got his first serious notion to consider law as a profession.

Brocato spent three summers as a law clerk for the Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office during his time at Loyola. He was also president of his student government during his senior year, and he held other leadership roles that helped crystallize his passion for helping other people.

“I was ultimately driven to pursue a career in which I could advocate for, and fight for, clients,” he says.

Brocato’s primary — and only — experience with litigation occurred before he ever became a licensed attorney: In addition to his summers with the State’s Attorney’s Office, he clerked for former Assistant U.S. Attorney Philip C. Parenti after the first year at Northwestern Law School. After his second year, he was a summer associate for Kirkland & Ellis. Before graduation, he also externed for Hon. Marvin E. Aspen as well as for the United States Attorney’s Office, in each case, in the Northern District of Illinois.

Despite a deep exposure to litigation, that side of the practice didn’t resonate enough with Brocato to drive him to become a litigator; he realized that the concept of making deals and not engaging in the frequently argumentative nature of litigation is “more in line with my personality,” he says.

“Oftentimes, there are argumentative parts of transactions, and working through those situations in a favorable way for your clients is a way you can bring them the most value,” he says. “I enjoy interactions in which we can have a disagreement, but there’s a common level of respect, and it’s a legal argument as opposed to one that doesn’t comport with the common goal.”

As chief operating officer of Novak Construction Company, Michael Kanzler hired Brocato after the company was dissatisfied with its previous counsel. Kanzler says that he goes the extra mile in trying to please his clients.

“He genuinely cares that not only is the work adequate, but the fee and relationship are also both adequate,” Kanzler says. “A lot of attorneys just want to handle a matter for you and move on. He wants to seek and sustain a relationship with you.”

Developing His Practice

Brocato was hired at Pedersen & Houpt right out of Northwestern University School of Law, where he was an editor of the Northwestern University Law Review. He credits the firm with immediately trusting him to handle a myriad of transactional issues — including real estate, corporate matters, mergers and acquisitions, restructuring, securities and employment. “I had fantastic mentors who trusted me and gave me what I believe was a lot more exposure to the depth and breadth of transactional work than some of my peers at other firms,” he says.

Moving on Decades Later

Brocato left Pedersen & Houpt for Gozdecki after nearly 22 years, with a glowing impression of a firm that played such a pivotal role in his career. “There were lots of great things about Pedersen, but above all else, I truly enjoyed working with the other attorneys there,” he says. “It was a very active firm and I had fantastic mentors there.”

He started with Gozdecki in March 2014, immediately heading up the firm’s transactional practice. The firm’s boutique nature — now at 16 lawyers, up from 10 when he started — is about half the size of Pedersen. The firm’s clientele include the

Continued on page 19
Chicago Blackhawks, the NFL and Samsung. “I was particularly attracted to Gozdecki’s dynamic and entrepreneurial culture, its marquee clientele, and the impressive value proposition the firm provides to its sophisticated clients,” he says. Fellow Gozdecki partner, Tamara Hibbard, has worked in the office adjacent to Brocato’s since she joined the firm last April; they work together serving many of the same commercial real estate and transactional clients. “You come to know a lot of rainmakers as you work in this profession, and Joe is a brilliant rainmaker,” Hibbard says. “But oftentimes, what happens when you turn your attention to rainmaking, your technical skills are put on the backseat, and sometimes you lose them. But he’s every bit as sharp as someone who’s a pure technician. It’s quite impressive that he can negotiate both things.”

Joe’s Musical Passion

Brocato’s love for all things music is apparent to anyone who spends any time with him — right down to the framed, autographed photos of the members of RUSH, his favorite band, on the wall of his office. In addition to Berwyn Jazz, which once allowed him to open for his idol, the late, great jazz drummer, Buddy Rich, he was a member of a number of bands as a young man.

**INFO WANTED**

Law School information, articles, gossip and miscellaneous wanted for the newsletter

The newsletter staff is anxious to receive information, articles, coming and goings pieces, photographs, informative articles, photo stories, or whatever, of all the law schools in the State of Illinois. Because of the educational law school background of most of the folks that write for the newsletter, there is a concentration of just one or two law schools. We’d really like to write about all nine law schools in Illinois.

Anyone interested in representing their law school for purposes of publishing items for the newsletter, please contact the justiniens@navandassoc.com

**President’s Message, continued from page 1**

I am pleased to note that we had 57 members in attendance and the championship team was comprised of players from both Cook and DuPage counties (see the separate article regarding this event).

We partnered with the Illinois Judge’s Association, the Illinois State Bar Association, and the John Marshall Law School to sponsor the Distinguished Professional Service dinner honoring Chief Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court Rita Garman, the Honorable Illinois Secretary of State, Jesse White and Senior Advisor to the University of Chicago president, Susan Sher. The event was well-attended and held at the lovely Standard Club.

As I write this article, we are approaching the annual Justinian Society of Lawyer’s Endowment Fund Children’s Endowment Fund dinner. This year the Endowment Fund will present two $2,500 grants to: Bear Necessities which provides financial assistance to pediatric cancer patients and their families and the Pro Bono Legal Network which provides legal counsel for child-related legal matters, particularly cases involving domestic violence and incarcerated mothers.

In this message, I’d like to recognize the hard work and dedication of newsletter editor, Leonard Amari who has been engaging readers (Justinian and non-Justinian alike). After 37 years Leonard is passing the editorial baton to Leonard DeFranco. Thank you, Leonard Amari for lovingly recording the professional and personal achievements of so many of our members and friends. Leonard DeFranco, we look forward to your tenure as you lead us into the digital age of publishing.

Educate (the next generation of Justinian leaders)

The Mass in Honor of Past Presidents was said at the Shrine of Our Lady of Pompei with dinner at a Chicago Italian-American institution, Tufano’s Vernon ParkTap. At this meeting, in a faux talk show forum, past presidents shared how the Justinian Society helped form their careers and leadership styles. Special thanks to Secretary Scannicchio for her work in organizing the Mass.

Recognizing that we live in a hyper-connected, global society, I tried to look beyond our “borders.” In January, 3rd Vice President, Vince Vidmer, organized an exchange with the Polish-American bar association, the Advocates Society. Justinian and Advocate mingled, dined on delicious Polish fare and attended an evening of CLE. In February, the Justinian Society co-sponsored the Cross Cultural Lawyer, another CLE event being offered through the Chicago Bar Association, Young Lawyer’s Division.

On May 13, 2015, I decided to recognize the next generation of Justinian leaders with the Anthony J. Fornelli Emerging Leader Award. The award is to be bestowed upon a current law student or recent law school graduate who demonstrates exemplary service as an officer of one of the student chapters of the Justinian Society of Lawyers. Marie Sarantakis, the energetic past president of the John Marshall Law School (2015) student chapter was our first recipient. Enjoy (the company of friends and colleagues)

The energetic and dedicated co-chairs Sam Tornatore and Vince Vidmer led our Society to a very successful and enjoyable golf outing. It was a lovely day which encouraged a turnout of 70 golfers. The Justinian Society of Lawyers Endowment Fund recognized a net income of $8,475.42.

Finally, thanks to the expert direction of Installation Chair, Judge Gloria Coco, The Justinian Society of Lawyers Endowment Fund hosted the annual, elegant gala and welcomed approximately 300 guests to the historic Palmer House Hotel.

As of this writing, the remaining social events are the young lawyer’s happy hour, the Nomination of Officers dinner in April at the LuxBar and the swearing in of 2016-17 officers at Gibson’s.

In closing, I borrow the motto of the University of Wisconsin at Madison, “Forward*” as my wish for the society. Thank you for the honor of serving as your president.

*For those of you who know me – did you really think I’d come to the end of my term and NOT mention my beloved undergrad alma mater in a president’s message?

- Jessica DePinto
President 2015-16
This month we highlight the very distinguished career of Eugene A. DiMonte and Riccardo A. DiMonte, father and son and alter egos of the significant north suburban law firm of DiMonte & Lizak. Gene, and now his exceptionally talented son, Riccardo, have been significant influences in our Chicagoland area legal community for many decades and in no small part, our ethnic community. They contribute time, effort, and talent to making Park Ridge and the Chicagoland community a better place with their quality legal services, as well as their contributions to the improvement of the Italian condition in these areas.

In their own words, and I’ll introduce our readers, those that do not know the DiMontes, Gene and Rick. First, in Gene’s own words:

“MY parents each immigrated here from Italy in their late teens and met here in Chicago. My father was from Caramanico in Abruzzo. My mother was from Montefalcone di Valfortore, Province of Benevento, Campania region. My wife, MaryRita’s parents and sister were born in Friuli Venezia Giulia. She was born here in Chicago.

I was born in 1936 in Chicago, Illinois. We lived in my grandfather’s house at 3920 Lexington Street. In 1946 our family moved to Stevensville, MI, along with two other uncles. I attended a two room school house there. We returned to Chicago in 1950 to the southwest side of Chicago. I attended Kelly High School and graduated in 1958. I received a bachelor of science in commerce degree (BSC) from DePaul University in 1958 and a JSD degree from DePaul in 1961. I never worked for a law firm and started my own practice after law school with a bit of help from an older lawyer. My primary initial area of practice was construction and real estate law which transitioned into zoning and real estate development. The practice then grew into a general corporate practice including banking and employment law. We also have a new strong estate planning group.

We presently have 26 lawyers in our firm and 21 staff personnel. We occupy our own building at 216 Higgins Road in Park Ridge.

All through law school I worked as a heating and air conditioning salesman on a commission basis to pay my own way through college and law school. I have never worked for a salary.

My father was a contractor and kept me busy weekends and summers. Between school, music, and work I never had time to get in trouble.

I played the tuba in many bands and orchestras including the Chicago Civic Symphony Orchestra and the Lyric Opera Orchestra. Because of the time constraints, I quit playing during college and unfortunately have never resumed doing so even though I still have an instrument and fool with it every once in a while.

My main hobby is raising and training bird dogs and hunting. My wife MaryRita and I were married after the first year of law school with two years to go to complete my studies in law. We have three sons, two of them were born before taking the bar exam. They are Riccardo, Rinaldo, and Alfredo.

In addition to my law practice, I have been very active in land development forming numerous ventures for that purpose.” And now, in Rick’s own words:

“As my father mentioned, my father and mother’s parents immigrated here from Italy. My mother’s family was from northern Italy and my father’s family was from southern Italy. You can genuinely say that I am, and my two brothers are, the product of a mixed marriage!

My parents met at DePaul University attending college and my father law school. They married in 1959 and I was born literally nine months later in June of 1960. Although my younger brother Ron and I were not aware of it, we both attended my father’s graduation from law school in 1961. Although we were too young to remember, we are both very proud that we attended his graduation ceremony.

I was very lucky to have (and I still have) such wonderful parents. With my grandparents’ Italian cultural background, we were raised very “Italian,” i.e., Catholic School, church every Sunday, frequent correspondence with our Italian relatives here in America and in Italy, Italian food at home and big Italian celebrations for religious holidays like Christmas and Easter, and American holidays like Thanksgiving and Fourth of July. Of course, my grandparents discouraged my father from learning Italian because it was very important for us to assimilate into the American culture, which I believe we have done.

As I mentioned above, I was born in 1960 in Oak Park where my parents had an apartment overlooking construction of the new Congress Expressway. A few years later, we bought a house in Elmwood Park, demolished it, and built two three-flats with family occupying adjacent units just like good Italians should do. In 1967, my parents and their three boys moved from Elmwood Park to South Barrington, Illinois, which was somewhat of a cultural shock but a very nice change for three boys to grow up in a semi-rural environment where we could enjoy the outdoors on a daily basis. My brothers and I attended St. Anne’s grammar school in Barrington and St. Viator High School (for boys) in Arlington Heights.

In terms of the law practice, I was very lucky to have such a hard-working and competent lawyer for a father. We spent a lot of time together on the weekends going hunting and fishing and his law cases and legal principles were a frequent topic of our discussions. For example, I was reading the Mark Twain classic “Huckleberry Finn” and didn’t know what the word “mortgage” meant. After I asked my father the meaning of the word during our next automobile ride, rest assured I knew what I meant at a very young age.

As a young man, I made up my mind that wearing a suit and working in an office was for sissies. I therefore started a landscaping business with my two younger brothers in approximately 1972. The business grew throughout the greater Barrington area, my brothers bought me out when I went to college, and my younger brother has raised a family and put four kids through college operating that business to this very day, 40 years later!

After landscaping, I became a logger and worked in the woods in the upper peninsula of Michigan. Although I loved working outdoors whether it was landscaping,
DiMonte, continued from page 20

logging, or construction, I quickly realized that manual labor would limit me and I immediately returned to college and applied for law school. I think my parents were very surprised after I spent 18 years convincing them that neither office work nor wearing suits and ties were for me. Now I have been wearing suits and ties continuously for 30 years practicing law so what did I know anyway?

I graduated from DePaul Law School in 1985 and worked as both a law clerk and a collection agent during law school. My collection agency business was primarily for court reporters so I collected money from every law firm in the city for court reporters’ attendance, deposition and trial transcripts. Since we had no cell phones or email, I personally visited over 100 law firms every year.

Once I graduated from law school, I had offers from several of the larger firms for higher salaries but my father convinced me that a small firm practice would put me ahead of my classmates in short order. I trusted and took his advice, joined his firm and we have grown from six lawyers in 1985 to 25 lawyers in 2015. Our five-year strategic plan puts us at 30 lawyers within the next two years.

In terms of law practice specialties, my dad was always a generalist doing both transactional work and litigation. I decided to specialize in commercial litigation early because I loved business (I earned my bachelor’s degree in business administration) and I loved the challenge of trial work as well. Over the years, I have progressed from collections to construction law and mechanic’s lien, bankruptcy, mortgage foreclosures, business divorce and sophisticated, multiple party commercial litigation of many types. I have tried two lottery prize cases to verdict and dabbled in all types of litigation including personal injury and federal civil rights.

I am very proud of what we have been able to accomplish here at DiMonte & Lizak, LLC. We have a group of very hard-working and intelligent, dedicated attorneys who practice at a very high level with very high standards and discipline. Our associate training program and mentoring is excellent and young attorneys join our firm to get hands-on experience in transactional and litigation work early in their careers.”

Examples of the best our community has to offer.

A Law License Isn’t Enough
Being a true legal professional requires much more work

By David P. Sterba
[Reprinted with permission from Chicago Lawyer Magazine]

You’ve landed your first position as a lawyer. So far so good, but don’t overlook the basics: Get to work early — every day. Be early for your court appearances, too. Work hard. Always be prepared. Dress appropriately. Indeed, if you are asking a court to take serious action, you have to be serious and dress seriously.

Above all, look and act like a professional. Simple enough. But there’s much, much more. Explore the legal community. Become aware of “who’s who and what’s what” in the legal world. Read the Chicago Daily Law Bulletin and bar journals; join at least one bar association and be actively involved; do pro bono work, preferably in an area of the law about which you feel passionate.

Cultivate relationships. First, find a mentor. Mentoring is important, especially during the daunting transition from law student to practitioner. Understand that in order to fully benefit from the mentor-protege relationship, you must be attentive. That is, you need to listen closely to your mentor.

Listen and learn about the challenges he or she has confronted and how they were overcome. Learn from his or her practical skills, legal customs and core values of professionalism vital to the practice of law.

The potential benefits from having a good mentor are endless. A good mentor, to be sure, is a beacon of light whose judgment and wisdom can greatly influence your personal and professional growth.

If you need help finding someone who is a good fit, someone with the right personal chemistry for you, consider a lawyer-to-lawyer mentoring program. The Illinois State Bar Association, The Chicago Bar Association and the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism provide excellent mentoring programs.

Moreover, many law firms have in-house lawyer-to-lawyer mentoring programs. Take advantage of these valuable resources.

Integrate yourself into your new profession, but don’t just meet people and network. Work at cultivating relationships that will evolve into strong personal/professional friendships that will last a lifetime.

Be civil. Some lawyers and judges too often ignore the ethic of reciprocity, also known as the Golden Rule.

The practice of law can no doubt be stressful and frustrating. But this reality will never justify uncivil or obnoxious behavior. Nor can incivility be excused as a casualty of zealous advocacy.

Indeed, the preamble of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct makes it clear: “Zealously does not mean mindlessly or unfairly or oppressively.” (Emphasis added.) Simply put, be polite and respectful to everyone.

Remember, it is not merely a matter of good manners, it is what is expected of you — the professional.

In fact, to this end, the Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism was established 10 years ago with the adoption of S. Ct. R. 799. The commission’s purpose is, in part, “to promote among the lawyers and judges of Illinois principles of integrity, professionalism and civility.” The creation of the commission, along with its stated purpose, underscores the importance the Supreme Court places on these virtues.

Finally, it is essential to establish yourself as an ethical lawyer. Everyone makes mistakes and will sometimes wish they had done something differently, or not at all.

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Sterba, continued from page 21

Such is the human condition. Imperfect beings perform imperfectly. All the more reason, however, to be very careful in how you conduct yourself.

Like it or not, lawyers are held to a higher standard than most others.

Read the Rules of Professional Conduct adopted by the Illinois Supreme Court. These rules are the foundation of the “law of lawyering” in Illinois. It is incumbent upon all lawyers, newly minted and seasoned, to understand and comply with the Supreme Court Rules of Professional Conduct.

If you are in doubt about your professional responsibility — unsure if a course of conduct is ethical — seek guidance from the Attorney Registration & Disciplinary Commission. Twenty years ago, the ARDC established an ethics inquiry program. This resource is available to assist lawyers whenever they have questions about their professional obligations. The program is free and is staffed by lawyers and paralegals experienced in addressing ethics issues.

Recognize that you will be judged as a lawyer not just on your legal acumen and practical skills but also on the quality of your character. Good or bad — this is how you will be known. So be mindful of the rules and be appropriate in how you conduct yourself. As Benjamin Franklin once said: “It takes many good deeds to build a good reputation, and only one bad one to lose it.” In sum, endeavor to earn a virtuous reputation as an honest, capable and industrious lawyer who is always prepared and then vigilantly protect it from tarnish.

Never compromise your good name. In the venerable words of Socrates, it is your “richest jewel.”

[About the Author: David P. Sterba is a retired Illinois Appellate Court justice and a former trial judge. He is currently a partner at Walsh Fewkes Sterba and an adjunct professor at The John Marshall Law School.]

Gemma Allen: Trail-Blazing Family Lawyer

By Leonard F. Amari

This month we highlight the career of a female trail-blazer of the family law practice in the State of Illinois and throughout the country — Gemma B. Allen.

Gemma B. Allen is a partner in Ladden & Allen, Chartered, a family law firm she established in 1999 to offer professional, caring and accessible representation in the areas of marriage, divorce, mediation, financial settlements, and custody matters. Prior to starting this firm, she was a partner in the notable Chicago law firms McDermott, Will & Emery, and Pretzel & Stouffer, where she was co-head of the divorce division.

Not only is Allen (maiden name Cassaretto) a prominent and respected family law attorney, she is also a visionary in the legal profession. For example, Gemma has conducted more than two dozen “Think Tanks” over the years, bringing together judges, mental health practitioners, clergy, attorneys and other interdisciplinary professionals who are interested in recognizing and addressing serious family law related matters. Because of her commitment to family law, Gemma has appeared over the years on Oprah, CNN’s “Talk Back Live,” ABC and NBC television, network radio and local Chicago broadcast outlets.

She not only represents people involved in failing or difficult marriages, custody battles and the like, as a leader in this complicated field, she is also a contributing writer and blogger for Today’s Chicago Woman magazine, and a frequent contributor to Chicago lawyer and the Chicago Daily Law Bulletin. Gemma has written more than 100 articles and lectured on topics that include divorce, custody, pre-marital agreements, child support, representing children in divorce, maintenance, pre-marital education, and mediation. She is the author of a book, Secrets of Successful Partners, which is a compilation of interviews she conducted with successfully married couples of all ages.

Long active in the largest of the 144 lawyers’ organizations in Illinois, the 35,000 member Illinois State Bar Association, she has served as an appointed member of its Family Law Section Council and was co-chair of the Model Mediation Act sub-committee. She was appointed a member of the Illinois Governor’s Task Force on Child Support and the Task Force on Attorneys for Children. She has served on the Advisory Council on Women of the Chicago Commission on Human Relations.

As a caring and responsible domestic practitioner, as a substantial community leader and contributor, Gemma is the past president of two nonprofit organizations: The Lilac Tree, a resource for women at all stages of divorce, and the Forensic Forum, a membership organization that provides a platform for forensic experts in the family law field to share information, propose legislation, and work to improve the practice of domestic relations.

Gemma repeatedly has been selected by her peers as a member of the Leading Lawyers Network® and a Super Lawyer®, and was named by Crain's Chicago Business as one of Chicago’s 100 Most Influential Women — no small accomplishment.

She received a B.S. magna cum laude from Loyola University of Chicago in 1966 and a J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School, in Ann Arbor, in 1969. She and her husband Albert Nader, founder and president of Questar Entertainment, one of the country’s leading producers, marketers and distributors of non-fiction programming, have four adult children and several grandchildren.

Gemma (Cassaretto) Allen is third generation Italian-American. Her father’s family was from Genoa. She is on the board of the Loyola University Chicago’s John Felice Rome Center. Her parents were friends of founder John Felice who then became her dear friend and mentor. She and her two children attended school there.

Gemma was appointed to the center’s alumni board and currently chairs its mentoring committee. She is also on the Foundation’s advisory board which meets annually in Rome. She has said that “While I'm a proud, dedicated American, Italy is the country of my soul.”

Gemma, along with retired Judge Michele Lowrance and financial expert Terry Savage, has just published a book about modern love. It's called The New Love Deal: Everything You Must Know Before Marrying, Moving In or Moving On.

Another example of the best our community has to offer.
By Leonard F. Amari

This month we highlight the distinguished career of prominent lawyer, litigator and political leader James P. Montana. Montana’s father, James Sr., was also a lawyer, highly respected attorney and community leader, truly beloved and well known and a moving force for decades in the successful growth of the 97 year old Justinian Society of Lawyers.

Of his dad, Jim says “He had a neighborhood office and one downtown. He mostly represented individual clients. He did a good job for them. That influenced me the most about becoming a lawyer.” One of the things that makes him most proud is when he walks down the street and runs into lawyers who knew his dad, and they say, “Boy, your dad was great. He helped me with this or with that.”

Montana completed his undergraduate degree at the respected Jesuit institution in the east, Georgetown. From there, he went on to study law at Northwestern University School of Law.

After law school, Montana went to work at the Wall Street firm of Simpson Thacher & Bartlett. He joined the firm’s litigation department. After three years, Montana decided to return to Chicago and join the U.S. Attorney’s Office.

As an assistant U.S. attorney, Montana worked under former Gov. James R. Thompson who was then the U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Illinois. “I not only served under him at the U.S. Attorney’s Office, but when he became governor, he appointed me to do certain things as outside counsel to the Governor’s Office.” Montana says Thompson respected Montana so much that he called on him to assist when the 1982 gubernatorial election was contested. He also called on him for important assignments while he was governor.


Montana is very proud that he served two Illinois governors. “Governor Edgar was great to work with,” Montana says. “It wasn’t hard to be his general counsel. He listened to me. He paid attention to the things I said.”

When Montana left the Governor’s Office, he became senior vice president and general counsel at Bally’s Entertainment Corporation, a national gaming entity, which then was headquartered in Chicago even though they had no Illinois casinos.

Montana was also on the Bally’s compliance committee, which made sure the gaming company followed all of the regulations in all of the states where it operated. The committee also reviewed the backgrounds of people being hired in major positions to uncover any issues from the past. Bally’s was eventually purchased by Hilton, which did not need a headquarters in Chicago, so the office was closed. “I was asked to stay on with the company, but I would have had to relocate to Atlantic City or Vegas,” says Montana. He declined.

After spending five years as a partner at DLA Piper, Montana joined Vedder Price 14 years ago, or so. He served as the head of the litigation department for three years.

Montana also handles some gaming law because of his experience as general counsel at Bally’s. He previously represented Caesar’s in connection with their unsuccessful effort to secure the 10th casino license in Rosemont.

Shortly after he joined Vedder Price, he was elected as the litigation practice area leader (from 1997 to 2002) and served very ably in that role. “I have really been involved in a lot of different and varied things in my legal career,” says Montana, “and because of my experience, I get called on a lot at Vedder to help with various things.” For example, because of his former general counsel role to the governor, if someone has an issue with the state of Illinois, Montana gets called in by his fellow partners to assist with whatever issues they are having.

On July 1, 2015, Montana set up his own law office at 20 S. Clark, where he will continue to work on white collar criminal cases, litigation, gaming and government relations, as well as acting as an arbitrator. Montana is an arbitrator with the American Arbitration Association assisting on commercial litigation matters. He works either as a single arbitrator or as part of a panel of three.

He is on the board of directors of the Chicago Special Olympics which meets monthly. “They are so dedicated. It’s a wonderful thing to watch. I help out in any way I can,” says Montana.

Montana has served on the board of the foundation and been a volunteer. He has also been a longtime participant in the Investing in Justice Campaign and a member of the Lincoln Circle.

Montana is member of Sen. Mark Kirk’s judicial selection committee, which makes recommendations to the senator for judicial vacancies for the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois in Chicago. Most recently, during his tenure as Illinois Governor, Pat Quinn appointed Jim to be a public member of the Illinois Medical Disciplinary Board. The board meets twice each month to review complaints against Illinois physicians for violations of the Medical Practice Act and can recommend probation, suspension, revocation or other sanctions. Montana’s four-year appointment to the unpaid position began in February 2014, and was recently reappointed by Governor Rauner as a member of this board.

Mr. Montana is a frequent speaker and lecturer, having served as an Adjunct Professor of Law at Loyola School of Law, where he taught Advanced Trial Practice. For many years he served as an instructor in the Midwest Region and Boulder, Colorado, for the National Institute for Trial Advocacy (NITA), which trains lawyers in trial skills. Montana has five children. None of them are lawyers. “I don’t understand it,” he says. He has a son who is a doctor in Ely, Minn., two daughters who are working moms, a son who works for a private equity firm in California, and a son who is a Tulane graduate. He has eight grandchildren. Montana’s wife, Lori Montana, was director of the Illinois State Lottery for six years.

Another example of the finest our community has to offer.
Jennifer Rosato Perea: Rosato Perea shines as DePaul Dean

By Leonard F. Amari

DePaul University has selected a nationally recognized leader in legal education as dean for the College of Law. Jennifer Rosato Perea, an accomplished scholar in family law, bioethics and civil procedure, will join DePaul July 1.

When Jennifer Rosato became dean of the Northern Illinois University (NIU) College of Law in July 2009, she also became the first Italian-American female dean of any law school in the country. It should also be mentioned that she also treasures her Latino ancestry, on her mother’s side.

Rosato came to NIU from Drexel University in Philadelphia, where she was part of the administrative team that created and launched the Earle Mack School of Law. An ambitious endeavor, but with 20-20 hindsight, she was obviously up to.

She was acting dean during the school’s first year of operation (July 2006 to April 2007) and a consultant on the project for a year prior. The experience she gained in those positions will continue to be useful in her role in the top spot at NIU Law.

The DePaul University search committee recognized that Rosato’s experience made her stand out, even among an excellent field of candidates culled from a national search.

The appointment to dean marks a significant transition for Rosato in several ways. For starters, she has moved to the Midwest from the East Coast, where she has spent most of her life and career. She grew up in Bethlehem, Pa., in a family of mixed ethnicity. Her father was Italian; her mother, Nicaraguan. Rosato attended public schools in the 1970s, and like many of her era, she became the first generation in the family to go to college and was accepted at Cornell University. The experience of going to a big school provided her with a new perspective.

Rosato earned a bachelor’s degree at Cornell in social work and, as a senior completing her practicum, worked as a caseworker in child protective services in Elmira, N.Y. It was there that her experiences dealing with children in foster care awakened her interest in law, particularly family law.

Rosato decided to enter the University of Pennsylvania Law School and threw herself wholeheartedly into the experience. She became editor-in-chief of the school’s Journal of International Business Law. She entered moot court competitions and won, even arguing before former U.S. Supreme Court Justice O’Connor as a third-year law student. She wanted to become involved in as many activities as she could handle and interact with as many of her peers and professors as possible.

“I loved law school. I saw it as an opportunity to really challenge myself and get a great education," she said. "It’s a chance to talk to smart people, to test your ideas and get to know your professors. I ate it up.”

For Rosato, the passion for family law issues continued to drive her career and scholarship. After she left law school, she clerked for a federal court judge for two years, spent a year as an associate in a Philadelphia law firm, then turned to teaching and writing on diverse legal issues. She was an instructor at Villanova University School of Law before moving to Brooklyn Law School in 1992, where she taught courses including civil procedure, legal ethics, bioethics and public policy, and family law.

While at Brooklyn Law School, Rosato was associate dean for student affairs and also co-director of the Center for Health, Science and Public Policy as well as professor of law.

In 2006, Rosato moved to Drexel University, and was hired as a professor and senior associate dean for student affairs for the new College of Law. She had been working as a consultant to Drexel, helping the university create the law school from the ground up, including hiring faculty and curriculum development. Then, as acting dean and associate dean, she had the opportunity to launch a law school to educate lawyers for the 21st century. Part of that vision was to build a law community that championed diversity.

Under her leadership at Northern Illinois University, the law school earned national recognition for diversity, value and public service. Rosato Perea doubled opportunities for experiential learning, including launching a clinic in health advocacy and dramatically expanding student externship opportunities, especially in Chicago. She led the development of a mentoring program for first-year students, pairing almost the entire class with alumni and other lawyers, and initiated a first-year professionalism program required for graduation. She also collaborated with areas across the university to create accelerated degree programs, allowing students to earn a bachelor’s and law degree in six years or less.

At DePaul, Rosato Perea will lead a law school recognized for its world-renowned faculty and innovative academic programs with creative approaches to professional skills training. In 2014, the National Law Journal placed DePaul’s College of Law first for Best LLM Program and Best Law School Clinical Program in Chicago. DePaul has had the largest number of graduates on the Illinois Super Lawyers list for the past six years.

The Congregation of the Mission (Vincentians) founded DePaul University in 1898. The university follows the ideals of St. Vincent de Paul, a 17th century French priest for whom the school is named. With nearly 24,000 students and about 300 academic programs, DePaul is the largest Catholic university in the United States and the largest private, nonprofit university in the Midwest.

DePaul’s tradition of providing a quality education to students from a broad range of backgrounds, with particular attention to first-generation students, has resulted in one of the nation’s most diverse student bodies. More information is online at depaul.edu. What also keeps her young is maintaining a healthy lifestyle with plenty of exercise. Rosato is a runner and often has often participated in 5K races. She also travels a lot: returning frequently to Philadelphia to be with her twelve-year-old daughter, attending conferences, and visiting alumni.

Dean Rosato is very happy with her career choice and is looking forward to assuming the reigns at DePaul University College of Law.

Another example of the best our community has to offer.
Justinian Society of Lawyers

Golf Outing

Wednesday, June 8, 2016

Bloomingdale Golf Club
(181 Glen Ellyn Rd., Bloomingdale)

2016-17 President Frank A. Sommario

Co-Chairs:
Sam Tornatore | Vince Vidmer | Richard Caldarazzo | Franco Coladipietro

Committee:
Bruno R. Marasso | Michael R. Grieco | Lou Siracusano

Golf & Dinner $150 Per Person - $600 Per Foursome
Dinner Only - $50 Per Person

Proceeds to Benefit the Justinian Society of Lawyers Endowment Fund

Includes golf, cart, full lunch with beverages, clubhouse locker room, dinner and prizes
Gift for every player
Raffle
Par three, hole-in-one, and other prizes!

Registration starts at 10:30 AM; Lunch to follow — Shotgun start at 12 PM sharp!
Cocktails at 5:00 PM — Dinner at 6:00 PM — Raffle and prizes following.

Name: _________________________________________________________

Company: ________________________________________________________

Address:  _________________________________________________________

City/State/Zip: _____________________________________________________

Telephone: (_____)__________ E-Mail ______________________________

No. Golf & Dinner Tickets: ______________ No. Dinner Only Tickets: ______________

Names of players (if available):

1. ____________________________________ 2. ____________________________
3. ____________________________________ 4. ____________________________

Enclosed is my check in amount of $_____________

RSVP BY May 25 — NO RESERVATIONS ACCEPTED WITHOUT PREPAYMENT

Please make checks payable to The Justinian Society of Lawyers Endowment Fund and mail to:

Nina Albano Vidmer | P.O. Box 3217 | Oak Brook | IL 60522 | (708) 338-0760

Pay online at www.justiniants.org - Hole sponsorships available! Great marketing tool!

All proceeds benefit The Justinian Society of Lawyers Endowment Fund, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.
Your contribution is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.
THE

Justinian Society
Annual Golf Outing
Wednesday, June 8, 2016
Bloomingdale Golf Club
181 Glen Ellyn Rd., Bloomingdale

Sponsorship & Raffle Prizes
Promotional opportunities available in many sizes - 1st come, 1st serve...Please select (x) your sponsorship below:

__ PLATINUM CLUB - $500
  _ Lunch
  _ Single Hole Sign
  _ Hole in One

__ GOLD CLUB - $300
  _ Beverage Cart
  _ Fruit Cart
  _ Registration Table
  SOLD Cigar Cart
  _ Players Cart

__ SILVER CLUB - $250
  _ Par 3 Volunteer Cart
  _ Bag Drop

__ BRONZE CLUB - $150
  Multiple Hole Sign

CONTRACT DEADLINE — MAY 25

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!
__ Yes, I would like to Volunteer the day of the outing!

RAFFLE PRIZES NEEDED!
__ Yes, I would like to DONATE a Raffle Prize!
(MINIMUM $50 VALUE)

Your Contact Information

Name: _________________________________________________________

Company: ________________________________________________________

Address:  _________________________________________________________

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Telephone: (_____)__________ E-Mail ______________________________

Contact Person_________________________

Yes, I would like to sponsor _____________________________

Enclosed is my check in amount of $__________

* NOTE: ALL SPONSORSHIPS AND GIFTS MUST BE PRE-APPROVED BY THE COMMITTEE!

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PAY ONLINE AT WWW.JUSTINIANS.ORG - HOLE SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE! GREAT MARKETING TOOL!
By Leonard F. Amari

This month we highlight the distinguished career of Raymond E. Rossi, highly respected judge of the Twelfth Circuit Court (Subcircuit Number 5) in Joliet, IL. He was elected in 2010 and his current term expires in 2016. Judge Rossi has had a distinguished career as a Village President (1993-2005), Chairperson of the South Suburban Tollway Authority (1995-2003, and Executive Committee member of the Chicago Area Transportation Council (2001-2005) and a plethora of other appointed and elected prominent positions in the community and local government. He is a dedicated community leader, someone who wears his Italian ethnicity on his sleeve, and a contributor to the wellbeing of not only the Italian-American community, but of people across the board.

When asked why Judge Rossi became a judge, he provided his judicial philosophy: “I’ve never run for office because I wanted to be someone, but rather because I want to do something. My goals in becoming a circuit court judge are to promote appreciation for the legal profession, promote continued respect to the Will County Judiciary, keep our streets safe and, in general, ensure that the tough decisions that are to be made are correctly made through common sense and a conservative judicial approach. I believe that these are the qualities one needs to run for judge.”

Judge Rossi served with great distinction as Village President (Mayor) of Frankfort for 12 years from 1993 to 2005, making significant advances for its residences. During that time, he was instrumental in lowering the tax rate in each of his twelve years while also instituting a tax rebate program for residents and creating a surplus each year. He achieved over $12,000,000 in grants, oversaw construction of a new police station that was paid by funds on-hand, multiplied economic growth, revitalized the downtown district, orchestrated development of parks and recreation facilities and created numerous communication tools to interact with community.

His civic work also includes the volunteer position as Chairperson of the South Suburban Tollway Authority (3rd Extension), Executive Committee member of the Chicago Area Transportation Council (“CATS”) and Grand Knight (President) of the Knights of Columbus Council 9770. He was nominated by Governor Edgar and twice confirmed by the Senate to be a volunteer member of the Joliet Arsenal Development Authority. He has been a Frankfort Township Committeeman, elected every 2 years from approximately 1984 to present, no small feat, started the Frankfort Main Street program and was the founder, head coach and President of the Falcons Wrestling Club that provides wrestling instruction to youth 5 days a week for 5 months of each year. Besides being a terrific elected official, his involvement with youth athletics demonstrates another side of this dynamic successful Italian-American. A man who truly cares about his community and people in general.

Judge “Raymondo” has authored and published cutting edge legal articles, been a long-time arbitrator (Panel Chairman), a long-time member of the Frankfort Lions and Knights of Columbus, was a leader on the Frankfort elementary School Action Plan Committee (Education Foundation study) and an Executive Board of Directors member of the Rainbow Council of Boy Scouts of America. He was also an elected Frankfort Township Trustee, Chairman of a Plan Commission, President, officer and director of a local homeowners association, on the Will County Board Old Plank Trail Committee, received the Service to Community Award of the Italian American Political Coalition, the political voice of our community, and been a member of the Pro Bono Panel-Trial Bar, U. S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois and Will County Pro Bono Advocates. Finally, like with his coaching of youth wrestling in his community, he was also a boys’ baseball coach, a member of his church’s Administration Council, a member of the Executive Board of Frankfort Township Central Committee and recognized for service to the Will County Board. Clearly, a man for all seasons – a man who understands the concepts of “giving back” and “paying it forward.”

His thoughts on public servants had this to say: “It makes it easy to find a role model when you live under the same roof as a man who has committed every living minute of his life to his family, his career and his civic and philanthropic responsibilities. He is my best friend.”

Another example of the best our community has to offer.
By Leonard F. Amari

This month we introduce in these pages, the highly respected and hardworking mayor of the City of Berwyn, Illinois, Robert J. Lovero (Bob), having been born at Mother Cabrini Hospital in the Taylor Street Neighborhood and residing in Berwyn for the last fifty years, has embraced his Italian-American heritage as an integral part of his life in public service. Both parents trace their roots to the Calabria region (though Bob’s dad also has some Hispanic roots as well). Throughout this time he has had the support of his family including father Thomas (deceased), mother Alba, brother Scott, wife Gail, son Thomas, daughters Danielle and Gabrielle, and grandsons Robert and Matthew. Bob was raised with a strong sense of Italian-American heritage and defines his upbringing in a classical Italian-American fashion. From the time his was a young boy, his father and mother taught him that through respect, education and hard work, he could achieve personal and professional success. Which he certainly has, along with the respect of everyone he comes into contact with.

Bob began his education in Berwyn graduating from St. Mary of Celle Grammar School, continued on to graduate from Fenwick High, proceeded to Loyola University where he graduated with a degree in Bachelor of Science with a major in Criminal Justice before receiving his doctorate at Northern Illinois University College of Law and passing the bar in 1981. Like many Italian-Americans of his generation, first and second generation, Bob has had the support of his family including father Thomas (deceased), mother Alba, brother Scott, wife Gail, son Thomas, daughters Danielle and Gabrielle, and grandsons Robert and Matthew. Bob was raised with a strong sense of Italian-American heritage and defines his upbringing in a classical Italian-American fashion. From the time his was a young boy, his father and mother taught him that through respect, education and hard work, he could achieve personal and professional success. Which he certainly has, along with the respect of everyone he comes into contact with.

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In 1982, after becoming a licensed attorney, Bob served as Assistant City Attorney and City Prosecutor to the City of Berwyn. He also practiced at a few Chicago law firms, concentrating in real estate law and trial work, before opening his own law practice within Berwyn that continues today.

Bob has been an active member in the following organizations: West Central Municipal Conference (Executive Board from 11/2010 to present), American Bar Association, Chicago Bar Association, West Suburban Bar Association, Justinian Society of Lawyers, Illinois State Bar Association, the Italian-American Civic Organization of Berwyn (President 1996 to 1998 and 2010 Man of the Year), Berwyn Democratic Organization, Township Democratic Committee (2005 to Present), Berwyn Township 708 Mental Health Board (1987 to 1990), Berwyn Development Corporation, Blue Ribbon Historical Committee, Local Law Enforcement Advisory Board, Delta Theta Phi Law Fraternity – Sir Edward Coke Chapter, Alpha Delta Gamma National Fraternity (Alpha Chapter – President), and co-chairman of the Berwyn Holiday Fund.

With his parents instilling strong Italian-American values, Bob’s public service experience started in his youth while participating in Boy Scout Troop 63 at St. Mary of Celle in Berwyn; he rose through the ranks and earned the achievement of Eagle Scout. He continued serving the City of Berwyn as 7th Ward Alderman from November 2000 to April of 2009. Elected as Berwyn’s Mayor in May of 2009, Bob has played a vital role in the business development renaissance occurring within the City. His reputation as Mayor is that of a young, aggressive and charismatic visionary. One whose only agenda is to improve his lifelong community of Berwyn. Bob recently was successful, having run unopposed for his second term in office. His present term runs until 2017.

In addition to redeveloping the business corridors within Berwyn, Bob has also been a generous benefactor to various local not for profit organizations that serve the community. Over the last few years, Bob has raised tens of thousands of dollars for local Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, the South and North Berwyn Educational Foundations, and he has supported scholarships for Berwyn residents and run enormously successful food and toy drives annually.

Bob hosts an annual Thanksgiving dinner to feed underprivileged Berwyn residents and provides food to shut-ins each year. Every year he provides several hundred food baskets to needy families during the Christmas season and helps host hundreds of sailors on Christmas Day.

With over 25 years of service behind him, Bob shows no sign of slowing down and continues to serve the residents of Berwyn through leadership and public service. Another example of the best our community has to offer.

By: Joseph F. Locallo, Jr.

Hai Fame?
(Are you hungry?) Then come to an authentic Italian pizzeria & wine bar in Wilmette, Illinois. Fellow Justinian, Nicholas Hynes and his soci in afarri (business partners) have created the perfect place for a pleasant repast and enjoyable libation for people who have the desire to visit Naples in their own backyard.

“Featuring a wood burning oven, imported straight from Napoli, or our Italian-made impastatrice (dough mixer) seen in its most famous pizzerias, our goal is to provide the most authentic Neapolitan pizza you can find on this side of the Atlantic”.

An abundant selection of wines by the glass or bottle is available to complement the pizzas or entrees. “Our wines on tap are especially delicious because they stay fresher and healthier longer”, said Matt Coulom, our server and guide to our selection of dinner and dolce.

Elly Rodriguez, our hostess, introduced us to Josh Schonfeld, the General Manager, whose warmth and congenial manners made our stay even the more enjoyable. Watching them extend themselves to fellow diners gives understanding to the success this restaurant will enjoy for a long time to come.

Whether you partake in pizza for your main course or the Paste e Risotto, compliment your entree with an Insalata and by all means have some of the vanilla, hazelnut chocolate, or pistachio gelato with some Italian coffee before you leave. You will not be disappointed.

Abbondanza!
Chicago sei UniCa!
An unexpected partnership between the University of Cagliari (“UniCa”) and The John Marshall Law School of Chicago

By Tommaso Lecca

One corner of Italy that is largely unknown to many people is the beautiful island of Sardinia. In fact, some maps of Italy (such as one on a popular pizza box you have probably seen) entirely forget to include the island Sardinia, which is the second largest island in the Mediterranean after Sicily.

In 1998, Professor William B.T. Mock of The John Marshall Law School joined a visiting professor program at the University of Cagliari, the capital of Sardinia. His experience quickly resulted in a sister school agreement between The John Marshall Law School and the University of Cagliari Faculty of Law. In the years since the agreement was established, many Italian law students came to study in Chicago and students from The John Marshall Law School went to Sardinia. There have been numerous exchanges of professors and scholars researching cutting-edge legal topics. In 2012, The John Marshall Law School and the University of Cagliari held the first Mare Nostrum Academic Conference in Cagliari to explore legal issues in the Mediterranean.

The successful collaborations with Cagliari have produced other events in Italy. The John Marshall Law School hosted a Global Legal Skills Conference in Verona in 2014, an event so successful that it will return in May 2016 for the next Global Legal Skills. These events are attended by a lawyers and law students from around the world, all gathered in Italy. Professor Mark Wojcik of The John Marshall Law School is the founder and a conference chair of the conference in Verona, and Professor Mock serves on the program committee for the conference.

The connection between John Marshall and Italy is strong. One need only hear the comments of Italian law students who have come to Chicago to pursue academic research at The John Marshall Law School.

Eliana Garau from Cagliari, remembering her time spent researching at The John Marshall Law School in 2014, said: “I didn’t expect such a change in my life before leaving. I thought only three months in Chicago, both for welcoming received by The John Marshall Law School, and for the (unexpected) hospitality by American people. Over that period I conducted my dissertation research thanks to an international level database, which is not provided by Italian universities. Moreover I gained an international experience that has made my resume more attractive in labor market. The United States exceeded my expectations: I had never run across such a dynamic and creative professional vibe.” Francesco Parodo, another previous student who attended the Law School during the same months, confirms his faculty mate’s words: “My time in Chicago was definitely awesome. Everybody at the John Marshall law school was kind and hospitable. The all experience is very important from a professional point of view.”

Even if the town where these students come from is incomparable to Chicago in population and geopolitical influence, interesting features characterize Cagliari. Its urban territory of about 430,000 people constitutes the smallest Italian metropolitan city (administration halfway level between municipality and region). The location gives such importance to this town; Cagliari is the Sardinian capital. The island, situated in the heart of western Mediterranean Sea, is famous for its amazing beaches, interior wild landscapes, archeological wonders, and the remarkable quality of its food and wine. The beauty and uniqueness of this land captured illustrious intellectuals such as the English novelist Lawrence, who wrote the book Sea and Sardinia, inspired by his journey from Cagliari to Nuoro in 1921. The famous Genoese songwriter Fabrizio De André, who chose the wild Sardinian nature as his adopted land, in a dramatic quotation suggested God to give humanity a place like Sardinia as paradise. The island gave birthplace to the 1926 Nobel Prize for Literature Grazia Deledda, who set in Sardinia her masterpieces. Despite a strong popular identity and local language different and discerned from Italian, the island played a key-role in the unification process that brought to the Italian independence and unification during the nineteenth century. When the Kingdom of Sardinia became part of Dukedom Savoy territory, the royal privilege was transmitted to the Savoy family, making successors become King. It’s undisputed among historians that without this title Vittorio Emanuele II would not have had the strategic authority to undertake the Italian countries unification process during the Risorgimento.

While discussing Sardinia, it is impossible to neglect the actual economical situation. The crisis has led to the high unemployment rate (18.2% at the moment) forcing young Sardinians to look for jobs in the “Continente” (as Sardinians refer to the rest of Italy) and, in many cases, even abroad.

Allowing young Sardinians to have educational experiences abroad is important not only for sending and hosting institutions that will benefit of a more international vibe; students and young graduates too will for sure deepen their competences and will more easily reach professional goals.

The relationship is sure to continue and to strengthen between Cagliari and Chicago. This year, Professor Mark Wojcik was awarded a one-month research grant at the University of Cagliari where he will study Italy’s compliance with decisions of the European Court of Human Rights. Professor Mock, asked about the future of Cagliari-Chicago cooperation, simply answered that it was “Dynamic! A talented group of professors, students, and professionals was put together thanks to this relationship. The fact that year after year we always have students who come to Chicago joining our visiting program, it means that everyone who took part in this experience shared his good memories with other students from Cagliari!”
ISBA Approves Proposed 711 Amendment Rule

By Marie Sarantakis

While externs, interns, and law clerks are traditionally thought of as conducting tedious menial assignments, such as taking coffee orders and making copies, today’s legal externs are performing fairly high-level work in their field. Many burgeoning lawyers are engaging in sophisticated tasks that entail legal reasoning and decision-making under the supervision of a licensed attorney. Illinois Supreme Court Rule 711 is a mechanism that enables them to do so.

Rule 711 allows law students in good academic standing, who have earned at least half of their total juris doctorate credits, to seek certification from the Dean of their respective law school, to be able to perform certain tasks traditionally reserved to an attorney. Eligible students may counsel, advise, and negotiate on behalf of clients. They may even represent clients in mediation proceedings and/or appear in court subject to certain limitations.

Under subsection (b) of the rule, only law students externing under the supervision of a legal aid organization, office of the public defender, or law office of the State are eligible to apply for a 711 limited law license. Noticeably excluded from this list are private law firms. This begs the question, why are students externing for private practitioners precluded from performing similar work?

This query was raised by Illinois State Bar Association (ISBA) President Umberto Davi. President Davi announced that one of his bar year initiatives would be to explore the viability of expanding 711 licenses to qualified law students working for private firms, so that a greater number of students could gain practical experience by being able to work more directly with clients and appear in court.

In furtherance of his initiative, President Davi developed the ISBA Special Committee on Rule 711 ("the Committee"). The exploratory Committee is chaired by the Honorable Michael Chmiel. Judge Chmiel has served on the bench for ten years and is the 2015 recipient of the ISBA’s Board of Governor’s Award in recognition of his exemplary contributions to the ISBA and legal profession at large. Judge Chmiel’s leadership, and his devotion to improving the profession and enhancing legal education, has enabled the Committee to make notable progress since its inception.

In the summer of 2015, the Committee gathered for its first meeting in Chicago. Committee members elicited feedback from the various substantive ISBA Section Councils for review and commentary. The Chair of each Section then synthesized their respective Council Members’ positions and concerns to report back to the Committee at large. The Committee carefully reviewed and responded to the suggestions contained within the reports when drafting their proposed changes to Rule 711.

Overall, Council leaders were in favor of expanding 711 licenses to private practitioners so long as that there were safeguards to ensure that supervising attorneys were competent and qualified so that law students received adequate training and supervision. To address these concerns, the Committee found it advisable to require supervising attorneys to be in good standing with the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission, assume professional responsibility for the law student, maintain malpractice insurance, and not supervise more than two students concurrently.

Moving forward, the Committee addressed the ISBA Board of Governors, who oversee the operation and management of the ISBA, seeking permission to report their findings and suggestions to the ISBA Assembly. The Assembly is the supreme policy making body of the organization. The Board of Governors unanimously approved the Committee’s presentation.

During the 2015 Midyear Meeting, Chair Chmiel, along with Committee members Vice Chair Kelli Gordon, Marie Sarantakis, and Professor Theresa Ceko addressed the Assembly. The Committee asked members of the Assembly to vote in favor of making a recommendation to the Supreme Court of Illinois to amend Rule 711 so that students working for private practitioners may be eligible to apply for a 711 license. The Assembly voted unanimously in favor of the Committee proceeding in their recommendation. Having obtained approval from both governing ISBA bodies, ISBA staff is currently preparing a petition to the Supreme Court of Illinois with the proposed amendment.

Questions and comments on this article can be directed to Ms. Sarantakis at msa-rant@law.jmls.edu.

[About the Author: Marie Sarantakis is a third-year law student at The John Marshall Law School (JMLS). She is a Past President of the JMLS Justitianian Society. Ms. Sarantakis currently serves as an Editor for the ISBA Young Lawyers Division Newsletter, Member of the ISBA Family Law Section Council, and ISBA Special Committee on Rule 711. She was appointed as Law Student Liaison to the State Bar of Wisconsin’s Family Law Section Executive Board. This past semester, Ms. Sarantakis was recognized with a CALI Award for receiving the highest grade in White Collar Crime at The John Marshall Law School and was the recipient of a Public Interest Advocate Scholarship from the Diversity Scholarship Foundation.]
By: Leonard F. Amari
[Reprinted with permission from the ISBA Senior Lawyers Newsletter]

Like the other members of our hardworking Illinois State Bar Association Senior Lawyers Section Council, I am sure I have come across the term “of counsel” many times in my career. Not really knowing the actual meaning of the term, I had an idea it identified some association with a law firm. It is an amorphous term; one that I did not know the correct definition of, at least by our state’s ethical standards.

As a young lawyer, starting my own solo practice right out of law school, and looking at my stationery with just one lonely name on it, I thought about adding people on the right side of the stationery, identifying them as “of counsel.” I enlisted a number of lawyers, pals, lawyers for whom I tried cases, and lawyers that sent me business. Was that okay? Is there an actual, understandable definition of this term, of this status? If so, what is it? That’s the purpose of this article.

Over the years, attorneys like me, and I am certain many of my fellow senior counselors, have created of counsel relationships for various reasons, mostly to generate additional business. After all, the increased exposure coupled with the presentation of close ties with another firm can be an effective marketing tool.

What is an “Of Counsel” Attorney, Anyway?

The generally understood meaning of this term is a lawyer who is not a partner, associate, shareholder, or member of a firm, but who has some sort of a close and continuing relationship with the firm.

The common view of the relationship is someone who is providing close, ongoing, regular and frequent contact for the purpose of consultation and advice, perhaps acting as a trusted advisor or senior counselor. An attempt was made to define the term by the American Bar Association in Formal Op. 330, issued in 1972, stating a lawyer was “of counsel” to a firm only when the relationship between the lawyer and the firm was “close, continuing, and personal” and when the relationship was not “that of a partner, associate, or outside counsel.” Pretty broad, yes?

According to the ABA opinion and successive informal opinions, a lawyer who was of counsel to a firm should have some regular daily contact with the firm; a law firm cannot be of counsel to another law firm; and a lawyer should not be of counsel to more than two firms. These restrictions proved impracticable when applied to common practice. As a result, the ABA revisited the definition of “of counsel” in 1990 in Formal Op. 90-357. Among other things, the requirement that contact be nearly on a daily basis, the advice that a law firm could not be “of counsel,” and the restrictions on the number of “of counsel” relationships that could simultaneously be maintained, were rejected.

Nevertheless, 90-357 reaffirmed that the “core characteristic” of “of counsel” was “a close, regular, personal relationship” but excluding “that of a partner (or its equivalent, a principal of a professional corporation), with the shared liability and/or managerial responsibility implied by that term,” and associates, defined as “a junior non-partner lawyer, regularly employed by the firm.” Lawyers identified as “tax counsel,” “antitrust counsel,” “special counsel” and the like are understood, de facto, to have an “of counsel” relationship to the firm, and the requirement of a “close, regular, personal relationship” applies to them as well, as do all the caveats and consequences discussed in this article.

According to Formal Op. 90-357, there are four types of of counsels:

1. the “part-time practitioner, who practices law in association with a firm, but on a basis different from that of the mainstream lawyers in the firm;”

2. a retired partner of the firm who provides institutional recollections of his or her experiences with the firm and is available for consultation;

3. a lawyer, usually a lateral hire, brought into the firm with the expectation that the lawyer will shortly become a member, e.g., associate, partner; and

4. a lawyer who occupies a permanent senior position in the firm with no expectation of becoming a partner.

These four examples underscore that “of counsel” should not be used to designate more casual relationships which depend on the occasional consultation; co-counseling in a single case, even if it is of long

Continued on page 32
Of counsel, continued from page 31

duration; “a relationship involving only occasional collaborative efforts among otherwise unrelated lawyers or firms;” or a relationship based solely on making or accepting referrals.

The name of a lawyer who is of counsel to a firm should not appear in the name of the firm (e.g., in its letterhead with partners and associates) unless the lawyer who is of counsel is a retired name partner of the firm. In all my years as a practicing attorney, I have never seen “of counsel” listed anywhere but on the right margin of a firm’s stationery, under the heading “of counsel.”

As my John Marshall Law School professor and later long-term Dean, Robert Gil Johnston, used to say: “but that begs the question”: what are the risks of serving as “of counsel” to a firm, if any?

There are a few risks that take on special significance in an “of counsel” relationship. In consulting various legal articles on the subject, they define the risks typically as:

• conflicts/disqualification,
• vicarious liability,
• insurance coverage disputes, and
• perhaps a few difficult-to-imagine outliers.

A. Conflicts/Disqualification

For conflict purposes, the of counsel affiliation means that the firm and the of counsel attorney will often be treated as one entity, thus governing disqualification, recusal, and any other conflict issues.

The problems are further compounded when a lawyer or firm has an of counsel relationship with more than one firm, since all of the lawyers in those firms may be disqualified, even if their only connection is the same of counsel lawyer, the proverbial “Pandora’s Box.”

B. Vicarious Liability

Of course a firm for which a lawyer serves only as “of counsel” is not going to be liable for the independent acts or omissions of the of counsel attorney that were not “within the scope” of the relationship, though those issues may still arise, especially if it would serve the purposes of an adversary in some way.

C. Insurance Coverage Disputes

In the unfortunate event of a claim, coverage problems can arise when an affiliated firm has done work on a matter that the of counsel attorney had no involvement in, or awareness of. Unfortunately, his name was listed on the letterhead so he may be named as a defendant. If the of counsel attorney is not covered by the affiliated firm’s malpractice policy, there may be a significant problem because the of counsel attorney’s own policy will often not afford coverage either. Or, at the very least, there becomes dueling “coverage denial,” between the malpractice insurance coverage carriers. Why? His policy only covers work done on behalf of clients of the named insured which in many instances is not the affiliated firm. These sorts of “who is the client,” “who is the attorney of record,” and “who is the named insured” are common challenges that underscore the necessity of investigating and addressing the insurance coverage issues early on.

Appropriate coverage for the exposures of both the affiliated firm and the of counsel attorney can usually be obtained, so long as the issue is addressed at the outset. My experience, though very limited, is that these insurance coverage issues are not thought about when establishing this amorphous relationship.

Of Counsel to Multiple Firms

Can a lawyer, under the ethical rules discussed here, serve as of counsel to multiple firms? Most ethics opinions I have reviewed have concluded that the permissibility of an attorney’s affiliation with multiple law firms as “of counsel” is determined by the nature of the relationship between the attorney and the law firm, and not by any predetermined numerical limit on such affiliations.

ABA Formal Ethics Opinion 90-357 concluded that a lawyer may become “of counsel” to multiple law firms, without limit, provided that the association with each is “close, regular [and] personal.” But all of the caveats discussed here must now be applied to all of the of counsel/firm relationships, conflict/disqualification, insurance coverage, and vicarious liability.

Of Counsel/Firm Fee Sharing Considerations

Fee generating and fee sharing has to be at the root, in some fashion, as the ab initio reason for the creation of the firm/of counsel relationship.

Of course, the general ethics rules allow client fees to be apportioned in any manner within a firm without disclosure to or approval from the firm client. But since the of counsel falls outside of this relationship, we have to recognize that the ethics rules contain disclosure and client approval requirements when fees are shared between different firms.

These requirements are set forth in ABA Model Rule 1.5(e). This rule allows the division of a fee between different firms either (a) in proportion to the “services performed”; or
(b) in some other proportion provided that each firm agrees to assume “joint responsibility for the representation.” ABA Model Rule 1.5(e) also requires that the identity of the lawyers or law firms who will participate in the representation of the client and the division of responsibility be disclosed in writing to the client and that the client give informed consent to the entire fee-sharing arrangement.

Illinois ethics rules governing the of counsel relationship are consistent with the aforementioned concerns and conclusions, including fee sharing.

We have been discussing the general lawyer understanding of the “of counsel” status, and we have reviewed the generally accepted and ABA standards. Locally, the Illinois Code of Professional Responsibility does not define the term “Of Counsel.” However, former DR 2-102(A) (4) of the ISBA Code of Professional Responsibility provides, as follows: A lawyer may be designated “Of Counsel” on a letterhead if he has a continuing relationship with a lawyer or law firm, other than as a partner or associate, and the term “Of Counsel” shown on a firm’s letterhead, and traditionally is used to indicate a former partner who is on a retirement or semi-retirement basis, or one who has retired from another partnership, from general private practice or from some public position and who remains or becomes available to the firm for consultation and advice, either generally or in a particular field.

Not dissimilar in any way to ABA Formal Op. 330, issued originally in 1972 and still the (national) standard.

Conclusion

After nearly 50 years in the practice of law, I have come across the term “of counsel” any number of times and, except for being curious, never bothered to investigate the actual definition and ethical ramifications of the relationship. In my nine years as a member of the Illinois Attorneys’ Registration and Disciplinary Commission Review Panel, the last three as the chair, and for any number of years before that as a member of the hearing panel of the ARDC, we never once had an ethical issue, lawyer charge, or were ever required to explore and apply a definition of the term of counsel. I have never seen it as an issue in a lawsuit, as a practicing attorney, including the 20-plus years I have served on the claims committee of our Illinois State Bar Association/Mutual Insurance Company. The last several years, I have served as Chairman of the Underwriting Committee of the ISBA/MIC and this status has never impacted the determination of a premium, coverage, denial of coverage, conflict, or any other hostile application.

So, to answer the question that began this article, in short, applying the most simple to understand and broadest definition of the term “of counsel,” it exists when the relationship between the lawyer and the firm is “close, continuing, and personal,” and a choice is made to become of counsel. Simple. Broad. I submit, still an amorphous term.

[Author’s note: I would like to give credit for the research done for this article by our Amari & Locallo law clerk, Tess Coughlin, a 3L at the John Marshall Law School.]
when they’ve done something they should not have (error) or when neglected to do something they should have (omission). It is also referred to as Professional Liability or Malpractice Insurance. EPLI covers employers against claims made by workers who have sued the company for violating their legal rights as employees. EPLI costs are affected by size of company, the type of business and the number of employees and the amount of time in business when deciding cost of the policy. Their are two types of policies -- Claims made and occurrence.

The most common is Claims Made policy -- Claims made during the policy period also will include "prior acts." Prior Acts coverage covering acts at any time prior to current policy must have a "Retroactive Date". When a Retroactive Date is used, prior acts coverage is provided from that date to the current policy.

Carriers prefer to exercise control over Legal counsel - But if the insures requests specific counsel (his own attorney) companies today will consider. As long as that firm has prior experience in EPLI claims.

The modern trend, even by small carriers, is to allow the use of the insured’s choice of counsel. Many EPLI policies require that the insured consent to settle any claim. Sometimes the insured and the insurer will disagree on this matter. In cases where they disagree over settlement, "Hammer Clauses" often govern the situation. It will limit the carrier to paid no more than the offer that was being settled on. Sometimes a carrier will agree on a "Soft" Hammer clause allows carrier and insured to share the cost beyond the claim and help the insured if he feels that the claim was frivolous and does not want to settle based on principle.

At this time as everyone knows these claims are on the rise and everyone should consult with the clients to make sure that this coverage is added to their Insurance Programs along with other Professional coverage to protect your clients from financial losses.

[About the Author: Roy Puccini "Insurance Consulting" Phone 630 461 0671 Material for Article --Stephanie Gironda, Esq. Woodbridge NJ ---also varies other reports Betterley Report Employment Insurance Coverage, Risk Management Magazine]

Acing The Audit: Record Retention Obligations

By Joseph R. Marconi & Brian C. Langs Johnson & Bell, Ltd.

Lawyers have traditionally created a great deal of paper. The amount of information kept on paper has been reduced as laws have been pulled into the electronic era by their more advanced clients. In this new era, the prevalence of sheer amount of electronic data created and received by lawyers can be absolutely overwhelming.

Does a lawyer have a responsibility to preserve all this tangible and virtual clutter after a file has been closed? If so, how long and at what cost? This article addresses the paper and electronic files that must be retained by a firm or small practice for some period of time under the law.

Client Contacts and Attorney Financials. Pursuant to Illinois Supreme Court Rule 769, every attorney has a duty to retain certain limited records for a minimum of seven years after the records are created. These records include (1) the name and last known address of each of the attorney’s clients, (2) record of whether the attorney’s representation of that client is ongoing or concluded, and (3) all financial records related to the attorney’s practice. With regard to financial records, Rule 769 specifically requires attorneys to retain bank statements, time and billing records, checks, check stubs, journals, ledgers, audits, financial statements, tax returns and tax reports from the past seven years. The Rule allows an attorney to maintain original, copies, or computer-generated images of these records. However, the Committee Comment to Rule 769 notes that while maintaining required records using certain electronic media, such as CDs and DVDs, may save space and reduce cost without increasing the risk of premature destruction, certain other storage media, such as floppy disks, tapes, hard drives, zip drives, and other magnetic media are not sufficient to meet the requirements of Rule 769 because they have normal life spans of less than seven years.

Records of Client Trust Account Funds. Rule 1.15(a) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct also requires lawyers in Illinois to retain complete records of client trust account funds and any other client property previously safeguarded by an attorney. These records must be retained for a period of seven years after termination of the client’s representation. Like Illinois Supreme Court Rule 769, Rule 1.15(a) allows these records to be maintained in electronic form, but only if printed copies can be produced and the records are readily accessible to the lawyer. Rule 1.15(a) was recently amended in July 2011 to include detailed specifics regarding the types of files that must be retained and the correct procedure for adherence.

Other Records and Files. Although the record retention procedures required by the rules above should be viewed as mandatory for lawyers practicing in Illinois, they are limited in scope, and there are number of scenarios that these rules do not directly address. The Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission of the Supreme Court of Illinois (“ARDC”) provides some limited advice. According to the ARDC, for records not covered Rule 769 or Rule 1.15, there are no rules that specifically cover how long a lawyer must keep records contained in a client’s file (unless the lawyer has been disciplined and the duties of Supreme Court Rule 764 would apply). Upon termination of the representation, the lawyer is required to return all papers and property received from the client (Rules 1.15(d) and 1.16(d)). For other records, the lawyer should exercise prudent judgment in determining how long to retain the client file, taking into consideration such things as when the statute of limitations for legal malpractice has expired, any particular difficulties in the relationship with the client or the representation, if the client was a minor or incompetent that might extend the period of limitations, whether the file contains any original documents that the client might want back, and whether any documents destroyed would be difficult to reconstruct from other sources.

The prudent lawyer should always err on the side of caution when deciding whether to destroy client files or records, especially considering the wide availability of reliable, cost-effective electronic file storage options.
Picking a Medicaid Strategy —
In Order to Protect Against the Costs of Nursing Home Care

By: Anthony Ferraro

Picking a strategy is not something one can easily do on their own. Selecting strategies in order to minimize the cost of long-term care requires an understanding of both the requirements of sophisticated estate planning and access to governmental benefits.

However in order to provide an overview of how strategies are selected, you must understand that strategies will vary depending on whether or not the senior is in one of the following phases:

1. Preplanning Mode
2. Wait-and-See Mode
3. Crisis Mode

Preplanning can be done when there is no threat of a long-term care stay that is imminent. Wait-and-see mode exists when there is a diagnosis but the senior will not be leaving home in the near term, and crisis mode is when the senior is in a nursing home or soon to be in a nursing home.

In preplanning, because time is on our side, we can engage in such strategies as looking for long-term care insurance to cover all, or part of, the cost of long-term care. Perhaps a long-term irrevocable trust that will put assets outside of the estate may be useful. Sometimes purchasing certain types of assets that are exempt non-countable is advisable.

In wait-and-see mode, because there is often a diagnosis, good powers of attorney for health and property and the preparation of wills and trusts that bypass the ill senior are essential. Also, changing the beneficiary designations on various assets so that they do not pass automatically on the death of the healthy spouse to the ill spouse is another consideration. It may be even possible, at this point, for the healthy spouse to obtain long-term care insurance.

In a crisis mode, it is essential that the ill senior be made eligible for Medicaid in order to cut the costs of long-term care. The only way a senior can be eligible is to be an asset level of no more than $2000, exempting non-countable assets like pre-paid burial arrangements, personal effects, very small life insurance policies, and limited other resources. All other assets must be converted to a non-countable status. This is not always possible, so quite often it is necessary in crisis mode to transfer assets from the senior. You must understand that this will result in a period of ineligibility for the senior. However, with the assistance of competent elder law counsel who specializes in Medicaid asset protection planning, it is possible to transfer assets while at the same time retaining enough assets in a form that will allow the penalty period to be paid down and the transferred assets to be protected.

Selecting a strategy for asset protection planning in long-term care is not an easy matter, but with the proper planning our office does it all the time. It is essential that Medicaid rules be followed strictly. This sounds like a heavy task, and it is, but the alternative of not selecting a strategy to protect assets from long-term care costs results in the impoverishment of seniors at a time in their life when they should not be destitute for such simple quality of life items, like hearing aids, eyeglasses, podiatry care, medications and certain therapies not covered by Medicaid.

Plan ahead, it’s your quality of life that is at stake in your senior years.

[About the Author: Anthony B. Ferraro, is a JD, MS Tax, CPA, and owner of The Law Offices Of Anthony B. Ferraro, LLC, Attorneys & CPAs, The Elder Law, Estate & Trust And Asset Protection Law Firm, based in Rosemont, IL. You may contact him at (847) 292-1220 or visit his website at www.abferrarolaw.com.]
U.S. Supreme Court Provides Help Negotiating Reimbursement From ERISA Plans in Montanile

By now most Plaintiff’s lawyers have run into trouble with the United States Supreme Court decision of US Airways, Inc. v. McCutchen, 133 S. Ct. 1537, 185 L. Ed. 2d 654 (2013). Under US Airways the Supreme Court held that an ERISA plan is entitled to repayment of the entire amount it paid for medical expenses without allowance for the participant’s legal fees. ERISA plan administrators customarily refuse any reduction and instead demand full repayment. US Airways refused to apply the Common Fund Doctrine to ERISA reimbursement claim. ERISA funded healthcare plans have become a thorn in the side of many lawyers trying to resolve a case and has left Plaintiffs lawyers, in effect, ERISA debt collectors.

Now almost three years after the McCutchen case emboldened ERISA plans administrators with a near trump card, Plaintiffs’ lawyers finally have some ammunition to fight back under Montanile v. Bd. of Trustees of Nat. Elevator Indus. Health Benefit Plan, 136 S. Ct. 651 (2016). In Montanile, Plaintiff’s ERISA plan paid more than $120,000 for his medical expenses. Montanile later sued and recovered a $500,000 settlement. Pursuant to the plan’s subrogation clause, the plan’s administration sought reimbursement from the settlement. Montanile’s attorney refused and informed the Board that the fund would be distributed from a client trust account to Montanile unless the Board objected within 14 days. The Board did not respond, and Montanile received the settlement. Six months later, the Board sued Montanile in Federal District Court under § 502(a)(3) of ERISA, which authorizes plan fiduciaries to file suit “to obtain ... appropriate equitable relief ... to enforce ... the terms of the plan.” 29 U.S.C. § 1132(a)(3). The Board sought an equitable lien on any settlement funds or property in Montanile’s possession and an order enjoining Montanile from dissipating any settlement funds. Montanile argued that because he had already spent almost all of the settlement proceeds, no identifiable fund existed against which to enforce the lien. The Plan administrators unsuccessfully argued that they should be able to recover from the Plaintiff-Participants general assets. The Supreme Court held that under ERISA, plans are only afforded “equitable remedies”. The Supreme Court agreed with Plaintiff stating that seeking the Participants general assets is a legal, rather than equitable, action and, therefore, not allowed under the statute. Since the money was dissipated to untraceable services such as food or travel the equitable lien on the settlement funds was extinguished. Historically, and still in Cook County, different courts existed to hear cases depending on whether the remedy sought was equitable or legal in nature. Equitable remedies are, nonmonetary judgments, specific performance, or an injunction. Legal remedies are monetary damages. ERISA plans are only entitled to equitable relief, such as a constructive trust, or some other type of equitable remedy, not general monetary damages. The lack of a legal remedy permitted by the ERISA statute, can be a major stumbling block in plan administrators’ attempts to obtain full repayment of their liens as the Montanile case highlights.

While the solution in Montanile is not ideal, it can be used as leverage to obtain a reduction in the claimed reimbursement. Plan administrators should take into consideration attorney’s fees, litigation costs incurred to obtain the recovery, metrics such as the true value of the plan participant’s case versus recovery actually made because of insurance limitations.

James J. Morici, Jr. is a partner in the firm of MORICI, FIGLIOLI & ASSOCIATES, and represents Plaintiffs in personal injury, workers’ compensation, and construction site related injury suits. Research & writing assistance provided by Tomas Cabrera, Associate in the firm of MORICI FIGLIOLI & ASSOCIATES. Read all prior issues of “Tort Notes” at www.MoriciFiglioli.com.
Congratulations to the Northwestern Pritzker School of Law students took home the top prizes at the American Bar Association’s (ABA) 15th Annual Law Student Tax Challenge at the ABA’s Section of Taxation 2016 Midyear Meeting in Los Angeles. From left to right: James Baker (front), Professor Sheffield (back), Daniel Wharton (front), Samuel Neece (back). Colleen Redden, former Amari & Locallo law clerk (front), Ester Santana (back), Janelle Darrell (front), Professor Wootton (back) Samuel Neece (LLM Tax ’16) and Colleen Redden (LLM Tax ‘16), coached by Professor Jeffrey Sheffield, came in second in the same competition. Samuel and Colleen are both JMLS graduates.

DePaul Law School Jennifer Rosato Perea and Paula Hudson Holderman were recognized by the IBF at its breakfast during the annual ISBA meeting in December. Jennifer Rosato Perea and John Locallo Paula Hudson Holderman and Katherine A. O’Dell (photos below).

A bocce ball league championship was held in Washington, D.C. Justinians took home first place. Former DePaul chapter President, Audrey Kucia, and Vice-President, Michael Santonocito, led their glow in the dark bocce ball team, “Take the Cannoli,” to the Wednesday night league championship on the National Mall in Washington, DC.

Audrey works at the U.S. Department of Treasury, Internal Revenue Service, Office of Chief Counsel. Michael works at Michael Best & Friedrich LLP.

The resolution honoring Umberto S. Davi upon receiving a resolution honoring him on his 2015-2016 Illinois State Bar Association Presidency. The Resolution was presented to him on Wednesday, September 23, 2015 by Mr. Richard Pellegrino, the Executive Director of the West Central Municipal Conference. Several of Umberto’s fellow Village Trustees, as well as family members, came out to support him. Photo below.

Justinians, John Marshall Alumni, and active ISBA members were well represented at the Quintairos, Prieto, Wood & Boyer, P.A Open House. Three Justinians, John Marshall Law Alum and active ISBA members. Pictured below are Ron Rascia, Michael Favia, and Judge Harrigan.

Congratulations to Steve Phillips and Jill Webb for receiving the Trial Lawyer Excellence award, from the Law Bulletin and Jury Verdict. It was awarded to them for the highest settlement or verdict in Peoria County of 17.5 million dollars for a 37 year old man who went in for hernia surgery and ended up blind, in a wheelchair and a permanent colostomy. When they got the case, the defense told them that they would never settle and this was just an unfortunate case. Four years later and one week before trial, they found Sicilian vision, wisdom, and justice. Photo below.

Congratulations to John Marshall Law School 2L student Anthony Pontillo upon making Law Review. Pictured is his son, Anthony Pontillo III.
William L. Niro, Bill@nirolaw.com, a seasoned veteran of law practice and his son, Christopher W. Niro, Chris@nirolaw.com, who is the Former Chair of the Illinois State Bar Association Young Lawyers Division and current member of the Board of Directors of the Illinois Bar Foundation, are now the owners of Niro Law Group, LLC. (135 S. LaSalle Street, Suite 3025 Chicago, IL 60603. (312) 767.2086. www.nirolaw.com). William and Christopher formed the new firm after leaving the Intellectual Property Litigation firm Niro, Haller & Niro. Niro Law Group will concentrate on the areas of intellectual property, business affairs counseling and litigation. Photo below: Bill & wife Cheryl, with son Chris

On May 5, 2016, Judge Celia Gamrath, along with nine other judges, will present at an all-day seminar titled “As Judges See It: Top Mistakes Attorneys Make in Domestic Relations Court,” hosted by the National Business Institute. Judge Gamrath also served as a faculty member of Judicial Ed Con in February and April, 2016. Pictured is Judge Gamrath with Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan.


Dick Caifano and his daughters. Dick was honored at the Senior Counselors’ Luncheon, photo below.

Congratulations to Nicholas J. Siciliano of Latham & Watkins LLP upon being promoted to of counsel.

Joseph M. Lucas & Associates, LLC and the Law Office of Bonnie Spacarrelli Hannon announced that they will be merging. Congratulations!

Congratulations to William V. Johnson, of Johnson & Bell, Ltd., on the 40th anniversary of the firm.

Congratulations to Cook County Circuit Judge Shelley Sutket-Dermer upon being sworn in as President of the Jewish Judges Association of Illinois.

Congratulations to Senator Michael Hastings and wife Katie, who are expecting their first child!

Congratulations to Mia Jiganti upon being appointed to the Joint Illinois Judges Association, ISBA, CBA Committee on Judicial Ethics.

Fitch, Even partner, Joseph F. Marinelli, presented a free one hour Continuing Legal Education webinar, “Current and Emerging Trends in Patent Law: Cases to Know and Cases to Watch” in October 2015. Congratulations on a well done presentation!

Anne R. Pramaggiore, President and CEO of Commonwealth Edison, received the William H. Avery Award for Equal Access to Justice. Congratulations!

Leading Lawyers Magazine Leonard Amari as #3 and John Locallo as #8 in the Top 10 Real Estate Tax Lawyers in Illinois. Leading Real Estate Tax Lawyers in Illinois is based upon the surveys conducted by Leading Lawyers. Pictured with the late Justice Moses W. Harrison, center.

Congratulations to career Justinian Carla R. Michelotti, recently retired from Leo Burnett, upon being inducted into the American Advertising Federation’s Advertising Hall of Fame on April 11, 2016 at the Waldorf Astoria in New York City. Carla is a past recipient of our Award of Excellence. Photo below from left: Judge Lisa Marino, Carla Michelotti, and Judge Celia Gamrath.
Robert Craghead, executive director of the Illinois State Bar Association celebrated 40 years of service with the organization on September 29, 2015. Current ISBA President Umberto Davi, recommended that Craghead's photo appear on the cover of the Illinois Bar Journal with a feature article about his ISBA career. Thank you for your 40 years of service and Congratulations, Bob!

Past Presidents of the ISBA at the annual mid-year meeting morning breakfast, pictured below.

Alejandro Caffarelli spoke at the U.S. District Court and 7th Circuit Bar Association’s Pro Bono and Public Service Committee’s program “Settling an SAP Employment Case: An Overview of Employment Law, Settlement Techniques and the U.S. District Court’s Settlement Assistance Program.”

Monica C. Palermo has joined Howard & Howard’s real estate and commercial litigation group.

James F. Botana was reappointed to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights’ Illinois State Advisory Committee.

Salvi, Schostok & Pritchard P.C. managing equity partner Patrick A. Salvi spoke at the Illinois Trial Lawyers Association’s Medical Malpractice Seminar on December 5, 2015. Salvi’s presentation was titled “Cross of Defendant.” Salvi practices in several limited areas primarily involving a trial practice in cases concerning serious personal injury, medical malpractice and wrongful death. Congratulations on a successful presentation! Pictured below are Patrick Salvi and his sons.

Banner & Witcoff, Ltd. elected Louis DiSanto to principal shareholder. Congratulations Louis!

The Law Office of Martin L. Glink added Erin V. Calandriello as an associate. Calandriello practices on medical malpractice, catastrophic personal injury and nursing home negligence. Congratulations Erin!

Boudreau, Nisivaco LLC managing partner John L. Nisivaco was the program coordinator and moderator of an Illinois State Bar Association seminar on February 17, “Foundation, Evidence and Objections: Before Trial, During Trial, On Appeal and After a Settlement.” Nisivaco handles cases involving catastrophic personal injury and wrongful death arising from automobile and trucking accidents, train collisions, construction site injuries, medical malpractice and defective product litigation. The Tort Law Section Council of the ISBA sponsored the seminar. Photo below from left: John Locallo, John Nisivaco, and Richard Caldarazzo.

Amari & Locallo added Katherine A. O’Dell and Joseph F. Locallo III as partners.

Congratulations to Lisa Armonda upon her recent position with the legal department of a very successful and growing company, Guaranteed Rate, owned by her brother. Her dad, Victor Ciardelli, is a career and truly beloved senior Justinian. Photo below from left, Dom Fichera, Jessica DePinto, and Victor Ciardelli.

Circuit Court Judge Thomas P. Fecarotta, Jr. has retired after a brilliant career on the bench.

The Illinois Institute for Continuing Legal Education named Salvi, Schostok & Pritchard partner Jeffrey J. Kroll as one of the recipients of its 2015 Addis E. Hull Award for his contribution to nearly 50 IICLE publications and seminars over the past decade.

Lisa M. Longo has joined the firm of Morici, Figlioli & Associates as a Senior Trial Attorney. The 15 year veteran of the Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office and dozens of felony jury trials joined MFA in November, 2015. Ms. Longo is a graduate of the Chicago-Kent College of Law, was named to the Dean’s List and was a member of the Chicago-Kent Trial Advocacy Team. She joined the Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office in 1998 eventually obtaining the position of First Chair Prosecutor at the Criminal Court’s Building located at 26th and California. Ms. Longo concentrates her practice in representation of the seriously injured in Plaintiff’s personal litigation.

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Recently a M60 tank in Hegewisch was dedicated to U.S. veterans. During this dedication, State Senate President John Culerton invoked World War II veteran and Southeast Side resident Don “Duke” Monico, who lost his left arm under heavy fire in the South Pacific and went on to advocate for veterans before his death in 1999. “With the memory of Don Monico and every other veteran we honor today with this memorial, I offer my most sincere gratitude and appreciation for their courage and their commitment,” he said. Of course, Duke Monico is the father of highly respected past President Michael and grandfather of Brian. Pictured below are Duke’s late wife and his son, Michael.

John O’Brien, Vice President and Counsel to the President of Attorneys’ Title, arranged for a significant program for real estate practitioners and included the highly respected Joe Marconi of Johnson & Bell, John Cesario, Senior Counsel for the Illinois Attorney Registration & Disciplinary Commission, and Melissa Kaplan, Vice President of Claims and Underwriting, ISBA Mutual Insurance Company. “JOB” has always had an eye for talent. Pictured are two past ISBA Presidents, John O’Brien and Irene Bahr.

Handler Thayer, LLP is pleased to announce that Michael T. Mazzone, C.P.A., J.D., LL.M. (Advanced Planning, Domestic & International Taxation, Estate Planning) has been named a Partner in the firm.

Phil Goldstick, Of Counsel to Amari & Locallo, was honored on March 8th at the University Club of Chicago by the University of Illinois Chicago Alumni for his achievements and support of the University of Illinois - Go Illini! Photo below: in attendance to see him obtain the award as his guests were Joseph & Kristine Locallo.

John O’Brien, on his new position with the Wrigley family office as Chief Operating Officer & General Counsel. Pictured below with Father John Costello from Loyola University Chicago and Paula Hudson Holderman.

Good luck in the November General Election to past President Jim Allegretti, unopposed in the Republican primary in March, to fill a vacancy in the 12th Judicial Subcircuit in Cook County. Photo below from left: Jim Allegretti, 3rd Vice President Vince Vidmer, and past President Joe Bisceglia.

Congratulations to our pal, Matthew Thomas Dattilo, on his new position with the Wrigley family office as Chief Operating Officer & General Counsel. Pictured below with Father John Costello from Loyola University Chicago and Paula Hudson Holderman.

Phil Goldstick, Of Counsel to Amari & Locallo, was honored on March 8th at the University Club of Chicago by the University of Illinois Chicago Alumni for his achievements and support of the University of Illinois - Go Illini! Photo below: in attendance to see him obtain the award as his guests were Joseph & Kristine Locallo.

Congratulations to Angela M. Buttitta, Gregory V. Ginex, Brian T. Monico, Matthew M. Gannon, Anna P. Krolikowska, Gregory T. Smith, Michael F. Bonamarte, IV, Gina A. DeBonf, Frank A. Sommario and Patrick A. Salvi, II upon being named as Emerging Lawyers on a fast track to the top by Chicago Lawyer magazine.

Tomas Cabrera, a 2015 cum laude graduate of the John Marshall Law School, has joined Morici, Figlioli & Associates as an Associate Attorney. Mr. Cabrera, a former law clerk with the firm, was born in Cuba, is fluent in both English and Spanish. He was raised in Wheaton, Illinois, and eventually attended Loyola University in Chicago where he received a joint Bachelor’s Degree in history and political science. His practice is concentrated in personal injury matters, including construction site negligence, premises liability, automobile negligence, and wrongful death litigation.
Congratulations to retired Judge Paul P. Biebel Jr. upon becoming of counsel to the highly respected firm of Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone PLC and after a brilliant career as a jurist – the last and longest being the presiding Judge at the Cook County Criminal Division. Photo below: Judge Biebel and the late Justice Moses Harrison

Daria Vasilescu was awarded the Allen H. Schwartz Memorial Scholarship and a Continuing Scholar Scholarship from The John Marshall Law School. She has also been appointed to serve as the Administrative Editor of the Review for Intellectual Property Law at The John Marshall Law School for the 2016-2017 school year.
The Archives
MLB baseball umpire, Dan Bellino, just before a major league playoff game in Texas, posed with George W. Bush. Dan is a 2009 JMLS grad.

Coladipietro and Bob Mariano, CEO of Roundy's/ Mariano's, at Mr. Mariano's City Club speaking engagement. Stephen Phillips and son Stephen at the US Supreme Court when the elder Phillips was sworn in the Washington DC Admission Ceremony. Stephen is a first year law student at Loyola. His younger son Michael is a freshman at Notre Dame. Guess who, guess where?

Amari & Locallo partner Franco Coladipietro and Bob Mariano, CEO of Roundy's/ Mariano's, at Mr. Mariano's City Club speaking engagement. Stephen Phillips and son Stephen at the US Supreme Court when the elder Phillips was sworn in the Washington DC Admission Ceremony. Stephen is a first year law student at Loyola. His younger son Michael is a freshman at Notre Dame. Guess who, guess where?

Barret and Deanna (Cairo) Arthur welcomed son Barret Kyle Arthur on January 23, 2016. He weighed 5 pounds and 5 ounces, and was 19.5 inches long.

Gianna LaBrasca

The Cairo Family; Proud grand-

The Cairo Family; Proud grand-

Sunday Runners

Colleen Redden, center, JMLS grad and former Amari & Locallo clerk, was sworn into the Illinois State Bar at a special ceremony at Amari & Locallo by Justice Thomas Kilbride. Also pictured with Hon. Debra B. Walker.

Gianna LaBrasca and granddaughter

Jack LaBrasca and granddaughter

parents

Sunday Runners
Friday, August 28, 2015, 10:30 am. Wisconsin Supreme Court, main court room in the Capitol Building, Madison, Wisconsin. Chief Supreme Court Justice Patience Drake Roggensack presiding; Motion to admit ISBA President Umberto Davi to the Wisconsin Bar made by Ralph Cagle, current President of the State Bar of Wisconsin and seconded by Michelle Behnke, past President of the Wisconsin Bar (to the right of the Justice) and current candidate for Treasurer of the American Bar Association. Motion granted. Also present: Janet Davi and Marie Sarantakis, third year student at the John Marshall Law School and second year intern at U. Davi’s Law Office.

Joseph F. Locallo, Jr., Partner at Amari & Locallo, and granddaughter Esther Pecia Kay

Leonard Amari and Chief Judge Rita Garman at the December 2015 JMLS Commencement.

John Locallo, Katherine O’Dell and Vesna Marusic from Amari & Locallo attended On Monday, November 16, 2015, the Chicago Bar Association’s Real Estate Taxation Committee will host the Twenty-Sixth Annual Luncheon honoring judges who preside and hear real estate tax matters in the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Chris and Jen Cali are very proud to welcome baby Christopher Giovanni Cali to the world. He was born November 12, 2015, weighing in at 8lbs, 4 ounces.

Gregg and Rebekah (Williams) Garofalo visit the Justinian headquarters with daughter Seraphina.

Guess who, guess where?

Jodie Needham participated in the Fight for Air Climb on February 14th, in honor of her dad and mom, since they both died from lung disease. She was the top fundraiser this year.
Obituaries

Marietta Adduci
It is with deepest regret that we inform you of the passing of Marietta J. Adduci, Mother of fellow Board Member Mayor Catherine Adduci, Village of River Forest.

Richard Cronin
Richard Marshall Cronin, M.D., age 89, of Elmhurst, IL, died peacefully Saturday night, February 27, 2016 surrounded by his wife Claire, his 9 children, and his 38 grandchildren. Richard was married for 64 years to the love of his life, Claire Cronin, nee Cusack; proud Father of Richard Jr. (Anne Mattimore Cronin), Cathleen M. Cronin, M.D. (G. Martin Mullen, M.D.), Brian T. Cronin (Maria Portela), Cynthia Cronin Cahill (Jerome F. Cahill, Jr.), Daniel J. Cronin (Julianna Ashley Cronin), Rosanne Cronin Pompe van Meerdervoort (Antoine Pompe van Meerdervoort), Sheila Cronin Bodee (Richard L. Bodee), Thomas C. Cronin (Regan Kuehnle Cronin), and John F. Cronin (Dulcinea Gillman).

Patsy Farace
It is with deepest regret that we inform you of the passing of Patsy Farace, mother of Anthony Farace.

Joanne Fecarotta
It is with deepest regret that we inform you of the passing of Joanne Fecarotta, mother of Judge Tom Fecarotta.

Justice Thomas Fitzgerald
Justice Thomas R. Fitzgerald, who retired from the Illinois Supreme Court in 2010 after a long and distinguished career, passed away Sunday, November 1, 2015. Richard was married for over 60 years to the love of his life, Claire Fitzgerald, nee Cusack; proud Father of Richard Jr. (Anne Mattimore Fitzgerald), Cathleen M. Fitzgerald, M.D. (G. Martin Mullen, M.D.), Brian T. Fitzgerald (Maria Portela), Cynthia Fitzgerald Cahill (Jerome F. Cahill, Jr.), Daniel J. Fitzgerald (Julianna Ashley Fitzgerald), Rosanne Fitzgerald Pompe van Meerdervoort (Antoine Pompe van Meerdervoort), Sheila Fitzgerald Bodee (Richard L. Bodee), Thomas C. Fitzgerald (Regan Kuehnle Fitzgerald), and John F. Fitzgerald (Dulcinea Gillman).

Theresa M. Follis
Theresa was the beloved mother of Glen V. Follis. She was the former president and CEO of Miller Bros. Engraving Company. She will be profoundly missed by everyone whose lives she touched.

Vincent Inserra
Vincent Louis Inserra, age 92, of Glenview. Beloved husband for 62 years to Marilyn Inserra nee Traweek; loving father of Thomas (Arlene), Paul (Janet), and Christine Inserra; dear friend of Chris Ellicott; proud grandfather of Katie, Thomas E., Mia, Josephine, Henry, Kaitlin, and Madison; dear friend of Chris Ellicott; fond uncle to many nieces and nephews.

Joe Louis Inserra
Beloved husband for 62 years to Marilyn Inserra nee Traweek; loving father of Thomas (Arlene), Paul (Janet), and Christine Inserra; dear friend of Chris Ellicott; fond uncle to many nieces and nephews.

Patsy Farace
It is with deepest regret that we inform you of the passing of Patsy Farace, mother of Anthony Farace.

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It is with deepest regret that we inform you of the passing of Joanne Fecarotta, mother of Judge Tom Fecarotta.

Justice Thomas Fitzgerald
Justice Thomas R. Fitzgerald, who retired from the Illinois Supreme Court in 2010 after a long and distinguished career, passed away Sunday, November 1, 2015. Richard was married for over 60 years to the love of his life, Claire Fitzgerald, nee Cusack; proud Father of Richard Jr. (Anne Mattimore Fitzgerald), Cathleen M. Fitzgerald, M.D. (G. Martin Mullen, M.D.), Brian T. Fitzgerald (Maria Portela), Cynthia Fitzgerald Cahill (Jerome F. Cahill, Jr.), Daniel J. Fitzgerald (Julianna Ashley Fitzgerald), Rosanne Fitzgerald Pompe van Meerdervoort (Antoine Pompe van Meerdervoort), Sheila Fitzgerald Bodee (Richard L. Bodee), Thomas C. Fitzgerald (Regan Kuehnle Fitzgerald), and John F. Fitzgerald (Dulcinea Gillman).

Richard Panariello
The father of John Marshall Law School registrar, Jodie Needham, often referred to at the school as “the Godmother,” recently lost her dad, Richard J. Panariello.

Richard J. Panariello, age 83, a longtime resident of Naperville, IL, and Fort Myers, FL, passed away peacefully on October 21, 2015. He was born on January 23, 1932 in Cambridge, MA.

Richard was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Ann Panariello, in March of 2005; and his sisters, Josephine Panariello and Christine (the late Frank) Crawley. He is survived by his loving children, Debbie (Bob) Anastasi, Jay Richard Panariello, Lynne (Mark) Tagatz, Jodie (Joe) Needham and Dianne (Tim) Dame; his cherished grandchildren, Sean, Nicholas and Larisa Anastasi, Tyler and Travis Panariello, Eric and David Tagatz, Jackie, Jordyn and Alec Dame; and his nephew, John (Noreen) Crawley.

Joseph R. Tybor
Joseph was a long time Chicago journalist and press secretary for the Illinois Supreme Court. He was 68 years old. He is survived by his wife, Sandra; daughter, Sarah (Kevin) Clark; son, Adam Tybor (Kerry Hartigan).

John Spatuzza
Eulogy of John G. Spatuzza
Good morning. My name is Alan Polikoff, and John was my friend.

I don’t think it’s necessary for me, at least, to reiterate the multitude of seemingly unending and considerable accomplishments and honors achieved by John. Those are already aptly detailed in his death notice. Instead, I’d rather share with you today a little bit about John from my personal perspective.

I first met John almost 45 years ago, when I was concluding my career as a prosecutor in the State’s Attorney’s Office of Cook County and was embarking on a career in the private practice of law. Now mind you, as most young lawyers probably do, when they don’t know enough to know any better, I thought I was quite the hotshot. After all, I had tried more than my fair share of cases and had argued approximately a dozen cases before the Illinois Appellate and Supreme Courts. In any event, it eventually dawned on me that I needed an office to set up shop; and with that as a backdrop, I was introduced to John through a colleague known to both of us. John had a vacant office in his suite which he and his dad, Mr. George, had occupied on the 24th floor of the building. It was the perfect place for me to open my practice. It was also the perfect place for me to start learning the art of advocacy as it was practiced by John.

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In addition to his legal abilities, John, as a person, was humble, gracious, thoughtful and genuinely kind: in essence, a gentleman. In fact, the dictionary definition of “gentleman” is “a polite, gracious or considerate man with high standards of propriety or correct behavior.” John epitomizes the very meaning of the word. To me, at the time of the origin of the word, it was as though the wordsmith had John in mind.

John was always there for his friends and family. John was a voracious reader and would often have several books going at the same time. He was knowledgeable about most of the Chicago professional sports teams and enjoyed talking about them. I shall miss our recent lively conversations about a variety of subjects, ranging from politics to baseball or football. Although his physical health was declining over the past several years, his mind, as always, even to the end, was razor sharp. Another thing about John: he was not a complainer, even during times of his failing health. Even near the end, he could be seen walking slowly – but with determination, whether with a cane or occasionally a walker for support – to the courthouse or the Recorder's Office; or he could be seen boarding a CTA bus for the trip to or from his office.

The name of Spatuzza has been prominent in the legal community since 1917, starting, of course, with Mr. George. John recently confided that he was hopeful of remaining in private practice until at least 2017 in order to observe 100 continuous and uninterrupted years of the name Spatuzza being in the active practice of law. He came, oh, so close. If all that were required was the sheer force of his will and spirit, the smart money would have been on John to have reached this milestone.

I shall miss my friend and mentor and, of course, am saddened by his death; yet, at the same time, I also rejoice for having known the man and for having observed him as he lived his personal and professional life the right way and on his terms.

John,
You've worked hard.
You've worked long.
You've done your job well.
You've cared.
You will forever be in the hearts of your friends and family.
You've earned the enduring respect and admiration of your colleagues and your clients.
You've lived a full, complete and productive life.
John, Rest in Peace.

Obits, continued from page 45

In Loving Memory of
John G. Spatuzza
1925 - 2016

floor at the LaSalle Wacker Building in Chicago. John and I quickly came to an office-space sharing arrangement which was solemnized by a handshake, which was John's preferred way of doing business in matters of that nature. John's thinking was simply that if another more favorable opportunity came my way, I should be able to leave his office whenever I wanted, without any legal entanglements occasioned by a written argument. As an aside, with the exception of one year, I remained with John over the next 20 years in whatever office suite he occupied at LaSalle Wacker, always on the same handshake deal.

During those 20 years, this hotshot learned a lot of what he didn't know. And a great deal of that was taught to me by John: for example, how to manage a law office and how to draft and understand documents in connection with various transactional matters. I also benefitted when John would ask me to litigate various cases he would get from time-to-time. John was very generous with me with his time, both professionally and personally. On a Saturday, sometimes I would bring my two young children to the office; and, no matter what he was doing at the time, John was never too busy to talk to my kids and to ask how they were and what they were doing.

John was a tireless worker on behalf of his clients; and the fees he charged were not the driving force behind his work ethic. I knew of more than a handful of cases on which he spent countless hours, even though the client was unable to pay but a fraction of the fee; and John did not make the client feel uncomfortable because of this circumstance. Now, I'm not saying that John was a pushover for every sob story some client might tell, for John was also a savvy, seasoned veteran attorney who knew the score, but he was able to temper this side of him with empathy which earned him the trust and confidence of his clients. John very much enjoyed the practice of law, especially so when a seemingly novel legal issue would arise in one of his cases. At the time of his death, John had been a practicing attorney for almost 65 years; and simply stated, he was one damn good lawyer.

Obit by Leonard Amari

Ferdinand P. Serpe
Obit by Leonard Amari

Our community recently lost a giant, figuratively and (almost) actually, Fred P. Serpe. A career community leader, respected lawyer and dear friend to many.

For many years and until his passing on December 5, 2015, Fred was a leader of the political voice of our ethnic community in the State of Illinois – a career board member from inception, its moving force, and in 2010, the president of the Italian American Political Coalition.

From the time “Fredo” graduated from The John Marshall Law School in 1984, he has demonstrated leadership skills, successes and accomplishments in numerous positions. His first role as a lawyer was as an assistant Illinois Attorney General in the Revenue Litigation Division. An example of his demonstration of leadership was as Executive Director of the Illinois Transportation Association from 1987 to 2001, involving himself in lobbying, legislation and related responsibilities. At this stage in his illustrious career, Fred had offices in Maywood, Itasca, and Arlington Heights.

Evidence of Fred’s leadership is demonstrated by the professional organizations in which he participated and exerted leadership. He was a senior statesman and influential member of The Justinian Society of (Italian) Lawyers, impacting in its direction for almost thirty-five years. He served as President of the prestigious West Suburban Bar Association, where he also served on its Board of Governors from 2003 to 2007. He has been active in the 32,000 member Illinois State Bar Association, where he served by presidential appointment to its Banking and Regulatory Section Council and Public Utilities and Transportation Law Committee.

Serpe also gave back to his law school, John Marshall, having served as a director of its Alumni Board for a decade – 1984-1994.

Fred was well-known for his dedication to improving the condition of Italian-Americans in the Chicagoland area. His public service efforts and contributions
during his distinguished career included: Special Counsel to Addison Township, the municipality of Calumet City and the Westchester Park District. He complemented Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White's office as Chairman of its Merit Commission. For Cook County Clerk Dorothy Brown, he served on an Industry Advisory Committee. He served the Cook County court system as a volunteer arbitrator in the 1st and 4th Municipal Districts, as well as served as a hearing officer for the village of Norridge.

Of her dear friend and career colleague, Dr. Mary Milano, also a highly respected, hard-working and beloved leader in our community, says: “Everything about Fred was counterintuitive in so many ways – looking so imposing but being so open and receptive. Being so large and yet so gentle in so many ways. Focused in appearance on making it all work on the financial side, but willing to go to bat privately for folks without resources. So kind as I recall to my mother when she was weak. And I always told him that I hoped my son inherited his sense of style! Fred had recently been diagnosed with cancer and had little voice due to treatments; one of the last few times we visited. But he said he would beat it. No matter what was going on with him, Fred was always ready to give a hand on the side with no fanfare. I will miss him. And I will miss the days in which men like Fred Serpe could have complexities, difficult to reveal, yet present beneath the surface and in consequence showing us something of God we would not otherwise see or know.”

Another close career friend, leading lawyer and community leader, Tom Battista, said upon learning of Fred’s passing: “I have shed tears and will shed more over this loss. He was a dear friend and complex man. He could be brash and completely sweet at the same time. He took charge of things and we didn’t mind being followers. He was a great cheerleader when he undertook a cause. And he was the most loyal of friends. I won’t get over this one.”

Ferdinand was the devoted husband of Roseanne (née Falzone) Sorrentino Serpe; beloved son of Elizabeth “Betty” and the late Ferdinand Serpe, Sr., loving brother of Elizabeth Serpe, dear godfather and friend to many.

So long Fredo, old friend. You will be sorely missed.

Verdicts & Settlements

By Michael Bonamarte IV

- Congratulations to Regina Picone Etherton on a $1,051,234.00 verdict in a medical malpractice case for failure to diagnose syphilis in a timely fashion. As a result of the delay in diagnosis the plaintiff’s syphilis progressed to neurosyphilis.

- Congratulations again to Regina Picone Etherton on a $625,000.00 settlement in a medical malpractice case for delaying a timely emergency C-section. As a result of the delays the baby died at just 8 days old.

- Congratulations to Lou Cairo on a $13,750,000.00 settlement on behalf on individual who suffered a severe traumatic brain injury, loss of sight in one eye and other injuries as a result of a fall from a scaffold at a construction site. The Defendant's superintendent was unaware of the fact that the scaffold had been recently moved or that there was no lifeline being used by Plaintiff during the 35 seconds that he was on the scaffold.

- Congratulations to Lou Cairo on a $10,000,000.00 settlement 4 days into trial. Lou represented a construction superintendent who was surveying an interstitial ceiling space in a highrise building for purposes of designing a mechanical system to be retrofit into the ceiling area. The area was unlit, filled with asbestos insulated trusses and numerous obstructions. The crew was dispatched with nothing but headlamps and no warning that the ceiling surface upon which they would be walking had numerous trap door areas that were covered with ordinary ceiling tiles, rather than a metal and lath system that was very safe to walk on. While maneuvering through the darkness of the space, the worker encountered an access panel covered with nothing but a ceiling tile and fell 13’. He suffered a mild TBI resulting in aphasia and apraxia, which cause a significant speech dysfluency.

- Congratulations to Lou Cairo on a $6,250,000.00 settlement. In November of 2010, a 25 year old Local 1 structural ironworker fell due to improperly welded metal deck with a new construction project of a commercial building in Chicago. He fell 30’ suffering a mild TBI and a wrist fracture. Suit was filed against the general contractor and ironworker sub-contractor that failed to weld the panels. Plaintiff was a devoted outdoorsman, climbing cliffs/mountains in Europe, engaging in extreme sports locally and traveling extensively. His head injury necessitates that he avoid any activities that could result in another trauma to his head, thus prohibiting his involvement in his extra-curricular sporting activities.

- Congratulations to Steve Phillips on a $9,000,000.00 settlement on behalf of a 37 week old premature baby who was discharged from the hospital without being tested for parainfluenza despite an outbreak of the virus in the NICU. The baby returned to the hospital four days later showing signs of parainfluenza, pneumonia, and brain damage.

- Congratulations again to Steve Phillips on a $590,000.00 settlement on behalf of a 46 year old woman who was struck by a cement truck while walking in a crosswalk at the intersection of Kinzie St. and State Street. She suffered a severely fractured arm, laceration to her face and body.

- Congratulations to James J. Morici, Jr., on a November verdict before the Honorable Judge Irwin J. Solganick in the amount of $1,170,000. Morici was assisted at trial by Senior Associate, David J. Schwener. They represented a woman who was rear-ended near the intersection of Rand and Wolf Roads in the Village of Mt. Prospect. The 65 year old Plaintiff sustained a herniated cervical disc for which she underwent a spinal fusion and repeat fusion due to a non-union. The matter was mediated before trial and the Defendants’ final offer of $700,000 was rejected and the matter proceeded to trial.

- Congratulations to James J. Morici, Jr. on a $375,000.00 settlement. The 82 year old Plaintiff was reaching for a jar of mayonnaise at Jewel when she caught her toe on an edge of a step-stool left in the aisle and unattended by a Jewel stockperson. The trip and fall caused the lady a fracture to the humerus and required that she undergo surgery for open reduction and internal fixation. She had a nearly four month hospital course due to several surgical and hospitalization related complications but eventually was able to return home with assistance. She resumed most of her normal living activities, but died of heart failure approximately eight months after the date of incident. During the investigation, Morici, Figgiani & Associates was able to uncover damning materials in a Jewel Employee’s Safety Handbook warning against the specific hazard created by leaving stepstools unattended in the grocery aisles.
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