

Fall 2024

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The Primerus Paradigm™

Fall 2024



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- Integrity
- Excellent Work Product
- Reasonable Fees
- Continuing Legal Education
- Civility
- Community Service

For a full description of these values, please visit primerus.com

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About Our Cover

More than three decades ago, the ad featured on the cover helped spawn the founding of Primerus. Now, the trio of tyrants serve as a timely reminder of the dangers of autocratic rule.

Articles in this publication are intended for informational purposes only and do not convey or constitute legal advice.

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Firework

An ad helped light the legal fuse that became Primerus

By Tom Kirvan

Two years before he founded Primerus in 1992, attorney Jack Buchanan decided to “fight fire with fire.” It was a notion that ran counter to the methodical and even-handed approach that he had traditionally employed in building his personal injury firm into one of the most successful and respected firms in Michigan.

At the time, Buchanan was among many attorneys who were distressed at the sagging public image of the legal profession, which had been taking it on the chin for more than a decade after the United States Supreme Court opened the door for lawyers to advertise their wares in 1977.

Once lawyers were free to spend ad dollars after the ruling in *Bates v. State Bar of Arizona*, some did so in a reckless fashion, hawking their legal services in ways that painted the profession in a bad light, according to Buchanan.

“Before long, we were fending off attacks from seemingly everywhere – politicians, late night comedians, and moviemakers,” Buchanan recalled. “As a profession, we were being likened to used car salesmen. Comedians had an endless supply of lawyer jokes, and movies like ‘My Cousin Vinny’ and Paul Newman’s ‘The Verdict’ helped reinforce the negative stereotype.”

Vice President Dan Quayle also piled on, declaring in a 1991 address at an America Bar Association meeting that the United States has “too many lawyers,” a particularly galling remark from an attorney himself.

But by that time Buchanan had already swung into action – placing a series of ads in print and broadcast media to help counter much of the negativity that was surrounding the legal profession.

The first ad was especially daring, depicting photos of Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, and Ayatollah Khomeini, bearing the message of “Three leaders who really knew how to streamline a legal system.”

Tyrannical law, by any measure, is brazenly “efficient,” the ad noted.

“Their law wasted no time or money,” the ad message said of the three tyrants. “They allowed no lengthy trials or appeals.”

“So next time you hear someone lament our legal system’s inefficiency, remind them: efficiency is possible. But its price is horribly high.”

Buchanan originally developed the ad campaign for his Grand Rapids law firm, Buchanan & Bos, in 1990. One of the ads centered on a drawing of Lady Justice, holding the scales of justice in one hand and a sword in the other, atop a headline that proclaimed, “She may be blind, but she isn’t stupid.”

Another featured a “fat cat” in a three-piece pinstripe suit, looking smug with cigar in hand, standing atop the headline, “In court, he’s no bigger than you.”

“By 1992, they were so effective along with our ‘How to Judge an Attorney’ brochure and our phone book ad that we were able to launch what is now Primerus,” explained Buchanan.

“The ads generated a lot of positive feedback from members of the bench and bar, most of whom were delighted that we were doing our part to advance the legal profession in the eyes of the public,” Buchanan added. “I think that many of them were tired of lawyers constantly being the butt of bad jokes.”



She may be blind, but she isn't stupid.

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For Buchanan, the job of restoring honor and dignity to the legal profession was a deeply personal matter by way of his family heritage. His father, William, was one of the partners in the Grand Rapids firm of Cholette Perkins & Buchanan. He ranked not only as a "hero in our family," but also as one of the "finest trial lawyers in the world as far as we were concerned," Buchanan said of his father.

It was a label the elder Buchanan could have shared with his brother, Cameron, a Detroit trial attorney who also enjoyed more than his share of courtroom success.

"They were my role models as lawyers," Buchanan said. "Both my dad and uncle were outstanding trial attorneys. My proudest achievement was following in their footsteps."

After earning his law degree from the University of Michigan, Buchanan went to work in his father's firm, trying cases "big and small" before 12-member juries for many years.

"It was an all-litigation firm where I learned to become comfortable speaking in front of a jury, developing a relationship with them over the course of the trial," said Buchanan, a past board member of the invitation-only International Academy of Trial Lawyers and a member of the American College of Trial Lawyers. "Back in the early days of my career, it seemed like the majority of cases went to trial. Now, probably 95 percent of the cases are settled, principally because of the time and expense, coupled with the fact that all of your cards are on the table after discovery proceedings."

The family ties to the legal profession also included his mother, Betty, an alumna of Wayne State University Law School in Detroit. Buchanan and his wife, Sheila, who serves as Executive Vice President and Meeting Planner for Primerus, also

are the parents of two of Michigan's most prominent attorneys. Their son, Rob Buchanan, heads the Buchanan Firm, a personal injury firm in Ada, and is a past president of the State Bar of Michigan. Their daughter, Jane Beckering, is a judge on the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Michigan after previously serving as a judge on the Michigan Court of Appeals.

All of the attorneys in the family have been inspired to various degrees by the fictional character of Atticus Finch, the protagonist in the 1960 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel "To Kill a Mockingbird" written by Harper Lee.

"That book – and the character of Atticus Finch – had a huge impact on me," Buchanan said. "He was the protector of the oppressed and the wrongly accused,

putting his life on the line for the concept of equal justice."


Symbolically, the Finch character also helped form the moral backbone of Primerus, which since its inception has prided itself as an organization that places a premium on honesty and integrity.

"Primerus firms are characterized by their commitment to the Six Pillars, which include Integrity, Excellent Work Product, Reasonable Fees, Continuing Legal Education, Civility, and Community Service," said Buchanan, noting that the Primerus name has "become synonymous around the world with high quality legal services" at a fair price.

"The most important decision a client must make in resolving or avoiding legal problems is finding the right lawyer, with the right skills, in the right location, and at

the right cost," Buchanan said. "We are an organization that helps them do that in cities across North America and in more than 50 other countries around the world."

And before he turns over the leadership reins of Primerus to a successor, Buchanan aims to convey a potentially even more important message.

"Lawyers have long served in the role of peacemakers, preventing and resolving conflicts through mediation, arbitration, contracts, laws, and treaties," Buchanan said. "This work has served as the inspiration for the creation of our Primerus Foundation, whose mission is much bigger than uplifting a profession. We want to eliminate the losses and suffering created by warfare through a new-found spirit of cooperation. It will be the cornerstone of our efforts." 



The character of Atticus Finch, portrayed by Gregory Peck in the film adaptation of the novel "To Kill a Mockingbird," has served as a model for racial justice.

An ad that was part of a Primerus campaign to "help rebuild the public's trust in lawyers and the judicial system," according to attorney and Primerus founder Jack Buchanan.



The Atrocities of Autocracies

**American lawyers
are uniquely
qualified to
defend democracy**

By Brian Cox

Since the inception of American democracy, lawyers have been the inspiration and the ink behind its development and expansion.

Of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence, 25 were attorneys or had legal training. Lawyers made up more than 60 percent of the 55 delegates who gathered in Philadelphia in 1787 to codify the new nation's core values in the U.S. Constitution – now the longest serving, written, national constitution in the world.

Among the 10 most consequential of the country's Founding Fathers – known as the “gallery of greats” – only three were not lawyers: George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and George Mason. Over the course of the last 248 years, American voters have elected 27 attorneys to “preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States” as president.

Many of the country's leading legal minds now see the looming emergence of authoritarianism in the upcoming presidential election as an existential threat to American democracy and the rule of law.

“America's democracy has been teetering on a knife's edge since January 6, 2021,” said former federal appeals court Judge J. Michael Luttig in a recent PBS interview. “I believe this election coming up is a test of America's commitment to its own democracy and to the rule of law.”

Luttig, one of the nation's leading conservative legal voices, served as co-chair of the American Bar Association's bipartisan Task Force for American Democracy, which was formed in 2023 to study the mounting strains on American democracy in recent years and provide actionable recommendations for reform.



Luttig and his colleagues on the Task Force are calling on the country's 1.3 million lawyers to play a significant role in rebuilding trust in elections by educating the public on the rule of law and how democracy and the Constitution underpin fundamental American values.

"The lawyers in America are uniquely qualified and they are uniquely obligated by their professional oath to defend America's democracy in this time of need," said Luttig.

Members of the ABA Task Force are not lonely legal voices in the desert lamenting the perilous state of American democracy.

Their warnings are passionately echoed by many other prominent members of the legal community who are sounding alarm bells about the rise of far-right extremism, which thrives in a hothouse filled with hate, bigotry, and wanton violence.

"The clear and present danger posed to our Constitutional order by misguided

partisans seeking to undermine and subvert the rule of law demands a compelling response from pro-democracy lawyers," said Alan Raul, former Reagan White House lawyer and board secretary of the Society for the Rule of Law. "We are living in a time when many of the rules and norms we have taken for granted – the sanctity of elections, the independence of the courts, the rule of law itself – are under sustained assault. Defending them is our highest priority."

The most infamous authoritarian regimes of the 20th century have been characterized by a charismatic leader, a mass party, and the formation of a dependent justice system that is answerable to the leader or party officials.

In each instance of authoritarian rule, lawyers and the justice system were identified early on by the nascent regimes as potential impediments to their tightening grip on power – and in each case, rather than offering resistance,

lawyers and the justice system ultimately fell in line.

Under Adolf Hitler, Nazis were fixated on a need for legal justification, according to New Hampshire attorney Jonathan P. Baird, a frequent columnist for The Concord Monitor. He argues that if lawyers and judges had resisted the "Nazification" of the law, it would have caused significant problems for Nazi leadership.

"While German lawyers and judges might have opposed Hitler's authority and the legitimacy of the Nazi regime, they failed to do so," Baird writes. "Not only did they fail, they collaborated and interpreted the law in ways that broadly facilitated the Nazis' ability to carry out their agenda."

Baird cites the failure of critical thinking by both lawyers and judges and concludes that the law profession in Nazi Germany "proved either too conformist or careerist to take chances and rock the boat."

"There was a massive failure of professional ethics," he writes. "Somehow, doing the right thing was replaced by subordination to a demagogue."

Historians trace many of the far-right's origins to Hitler, the maniacal architect of the Third Reich who orchestrated the extermination of more than 6 million Jews during World War II.

The likes of his deadly handiwork are now being carried out by Russia's Vladimir Putin, whose avowed mission is to put a chokehold on Ukraine until it crumbles against his indiscriminate killing. Russian aggression, like that of the Nazi military machine in the run-up to World War II, will cost the world dearly, spilling innocent blood everywhere unless there is a concerted international effort to stop this evil from spreading.

While German attorneys and judges were acquiescing their legal obligations to the Führer, the legal community in Italy was reluctantly coming to terms with their own dictator, Benito Mussolini.

Shortly after Mussolini became prime minister in 1922, he invited all Italian lawyers to "accede to Fascism," according to attorney Brandon Gatto in his essay "Race Law Revisited: A Brief Review of Anti-Semitism and the Role of Lawyers in Fascist Italy."

"The support of fascism by lawyers and their cooperation with Italy's new government was an objective that Mussolini evidently took very seriously," writes Gatto. "He frequently wrote of attorneys as the 'pillars of the regime.'"

Gatto says that while many lawyers of the national bar appeared to be skeptical of the new regime's motivations, opposition was effectively squelched when any "law firms opposing the new government were destroyed." Anti-fascist attorneys had to keep their heads down and their voices low because they were viewed as enemies of the state.

From the beginning of his autocratic rule in 1922, Mussolini employed prison as a tool to silence and punish any opposition. Concentration camps were established across the regime's conquered countries. After the passage of the Italian Racial Laws in 1938, victims of the concentration camp system included increasing numbers of Italian Jews. Over the duration of his rule, it is estimated that Mussolini had some 2,000 political opponents killed.



The Italian Supreme Court of Cassation is the highest court of Italy. Under the Fascist regime of Benito Mussolini from 1925-43, all three branches of power – executive, legislative, and judiciary – became one, answering only to the dictator. Justice, equity, and the due process of law were gravely jeopardized during Mussolini's rule.

“The acknowledgment that lawyers could have done more is, unquestionably, a contributing factor to the progressivism promoted by the current Italian bar,” concludes Gatto.

At the time of the Russian Revolution in 1917, Bolsheviks viewed attorneys with suspicion and as instruments of the upper class. In the ensuing year, the imperial justice system was demolished and the national bar disbanded. Of the estimated 13,000 Russian attorneys in 1917, only about 650 remained four years later. When the bar was reformed in 1922, Soviet attorneys had learned to be less concerned with the individual interests of their clients than with placing themselves at the service of the court and the state.

The cost, in terms of human life, was almost incalculable. Historians estimate that the “Red Terror,” unleashed first by Vladimir Lenin and then by Joseph Stalin’s communist regime during his reign from 1929-53, killed more than 20 million.

Another repressive regime gained a foothold in 1979 when Iran’s Islamic Revolution took place, elevating Ayatollah Khomeini into power and setting the stage for the 444-day Iran hostage crisis in which 53 American diplomats and citizens were held captive in the capital city of Tehran.

Jenny Norton of the BBC writes that one of the Islamic cleric’s first moves was to establish his own version of divine justice.

“Secretive courts were set up to try suspected ideological opponents of the regime, with no jury, no defense lawyers, and often no evidence beyond a confession extracted from the defendant by means of torture,” Norton says.

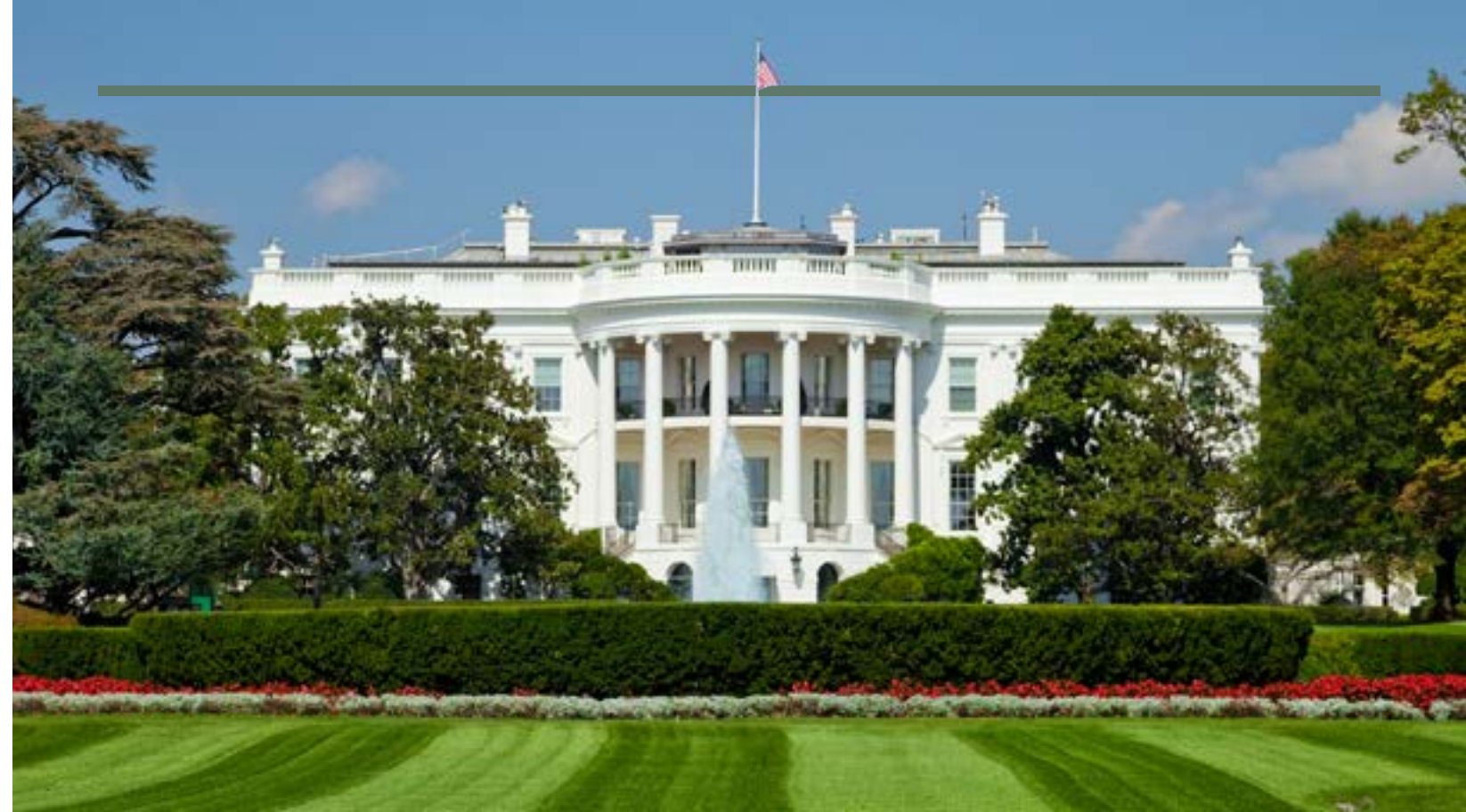
It wasn’t until the mid-1990s that defense attorneys in Iran were once again allowed to be present during interrogations and trials.

Not to be outdone, North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un, continues to send his form of neighborly greetings, firing a barrage of missiles into the nearby waters of South Korea and Japan, flexing his military muscle at the expense of an imprisoned citizenry suffering from chronic food shortages.

The North Korean regime’s annual military spending, estimated at more than 25 percent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP), comes at an even higher cost when coupled with the death rate caused by famine, which the United Nations estimates at hundreds of thousands of North Korean citizens each year.

The question of whether the United States is susceptible to a takeover by a charismatic authoritarian leader is at the heart of the ABA’s Task Force for American Democracy. The perception that lawyers are “uniquely” qualified to stand against the rise of an American autocrat is prevalent in bar associations across the country.

“[Lawyers] are uniquely equipped to uphold the rule of law, rejuvenate judicial norms, safeguard election integrity, and protect the dedicated professionals and volunteers who uphold our legal system. It is also our duty to mentor the next generation of lawyers on their critical role in democracy,” writes ABA Immediate Past President Mary L. Smith in the introduction to the task force’s initial report.



The New York Bar recently offered a CLE program titled “Protecting Democracy and the Rule of Law: A Lawyer’s Unique Responsibility.” The program examined the role that lawyer silence and complicity played in the erosion of the rule of law in Germany during the 1930s, in Argentina and Chile during the 1970s, and in Hungary and other countries, including the U.S., in more recent years.

“...Lawyers serve as crucial gatekeepers to legal institutions targeted by autocrats,” writes UCLA School of Law professor Scott Cummings in the California Law Review article “Lawyers in Backsliding Democracy.”

Cummings goes on to add, “Precisely because lawyers are guardians of the legal legitimacy upon which autocratic legalism depends, the profession is a critical arena of democratic struggle that merits special attention.”

Several legal scholars have recently noted the rise of “legal autocrats” in such places as Russia, Turkey, Hungary, and

Venezuela who, in place of violence and upheaval, employ laws, constitutional revision, misinformation, and institutional reform to wrest control of the country and dismantle any structures that would preserve democratic legitimacy.


“... democracies are not just failing for cultural or economic or political reasons,” argues Kim Scheppele in her 2018 essay “Autocratic Legalism,” which appeared in the University of Chicago Law Review. “Some constitutional democracies are being deliberately hijacked by a set of legally clever autocrats, who use constitutionalism and democracy to destroy both.”

Scheppele contends that this new brand of autocrat uses his “democratic mandates to launch legal reforms that remove the checks on executive power, limit the challenges to their rule, and undermine the crucial accountability institutions of a democratic state.”

In his classic work “Democracy in America,” the French aristocrat and historian

Alexis de Tocqueville lists the legal profession and the jury system as two of the three natural checks against the threat of “tyranny of the majority in the United States.” Of the three, Tocqueville places the most confidence in lawyers.

“When one visits Americans and when one studies their laws, one sees that the authority they have given to lawyers and the influence that they have allowed them to have in the government form the most powerful barrier today against the lapses of democracy,” Tocqueville writes.

Looking ahead to July 2026, some 18 months into a new president’s term, Americans will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The strength and well-being of the American democracy under which that celebration takes place will be determined this November on a defining day in our nation’s history. 



Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Courts are believed to have participated in the secret mass killings of thousands of political prisoners following the rise to power of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979. Khomeini appointed clerics to serve as judges on Revolutionary Tribunals set up to eliminate political opposition.

A closing argument for a case with long term consequences



A fair, equitable, and just society. Those will be among the essential elements at stake this fall when American voters cast their ballots in the November 5 presidential election.

The 2024 campaign, it would be safe to say, has been unlike any other. It has been marked by such headline-grabbing events in the last few months as two assassination attempts, a surprise decision by the incumbent to withdraw from the race for the White House, and the unexpected candidacy of the first woman of color to be a presidential nominee.

And with a month to go before the final votes are tallied in this election, it seems certain that more campaign

surprises and revelations are bound to come.

Yet, despite the prospect of any bombshells being lobbed on election eve, the candidates have drawn clear lines of demarcation as to where they stand on such key issues as immigration, reproductive rights, climate change, gun control, economic regulations, and the future of democracy and the rule of law. More about all that later.

In recent months, as the campaign rhetoric has heated up, leaders from the American Bar Association (ABA) decided it was time to make their feelings known about the last two issues in particular, unveiling a letter signed by more than 100 deans from America's law schools underscoring the importance

of sustaining our constitutional democracy and the rule of law.

"Today, our nation and world are at an inflection point," then-ABA President Mary Smith said. "At home and around the globe, autocrats and dictators threaten the rule of law. Our democracy is under strain. A fundamental cause of this crisis lies in the fact that many of our citizens are not educated on the rule of law and the basic principles of our democratic republic."

The message delivered by the ABA Task Force for American Democracy highlighted the need for political civility, to disagree respectfully, to be open to opposing arguments, and to engage across partisan and ideological divides.

Task Force Co-Chair Jeh Johnson, former Secretary of Homeland Security, said, "This is not a partisan political issue. It is Rule of Law 101. The next generation of lawyers must understand the challenges we face, take the torch we pass to them, and continue the hard work to safeguard our democracy."

ABA Task Force Co-Chair J. Michael Luttig, a retired federal judge, stressed the legal profession's importance in the process.

"Lawyers are uniquely qualified and uniquely obligated by oath to support and defend America's democracy and rule of law, and they are being called to lead. They must answer the call."

So, for those who care about or are somehow connected to the legal profession, it's time to weigh the evidence as to which candidate – and which party – offers the best hope for preserving our democracy and our most cherished individual liberties.

In some respects, it is analogous to making a decision as to which airline to take for a family vacation overseas, a potentially perilous crossing where the lives of everyone onboard are in danger if the pilots and maintenance crew are ill-prepared for the assignment.

Clearly, when it comes time to picking the right airline, you want the best, safest, and most trusted in the business, even if it comes at a somewhat higher cost than its competitors. After all, you and your precious family will be flying at a cruising altitude of some 40,000 feet where the air is dangerously thin and the temperatures dip between 50 and 70 degrees below zero. In the event of some sort of mechanical trouble, the chances of making a safe landing somewhere over the ocean are akin to



attempting to extinguish a raging forest fire with a garden hose.

Now, as Election Day approaches, we are about to go on a four-year ride with either a Republican or a Democrat at the controls. One is a former president making his third bid for a seat in the Oval Office, while the other is a former U.S. Senator and the current Vice President. They differ in age, gender, color, and temperament, setting the stage for a presidential race that could define our course as a nation for decades.

During his four years in office, former President Donald Trump made good on a promise to pass a massive tax cut plan, a measure enacted in 2017 that slashed corporate rates while also largely benefitting high-income households. Certain provisions of the legislation impacting individual rates and estate taxes are scheduled to expire in 2025.

He also led the effort to repeal *Roe v. Wade*, the five-decade-old decision that guaranteed the constitutional right to an abortion. The reversal can be credited to his appointment of three conservative justices to the Supreme Court – Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh, and Amy

Coney Barrett – who voted in favor of overturning the 1973 *Roe* decision that protected the reproductive rights of women.

In one of the main planks of his 2016 campaign platform, he also promised to build a wall along the U.S.'s southern border and "I'll have Mexico pay for that wall" in hopes of stemming the flow of illegal immigrants from Latin American countries. As envisioned, his signature wall would range in height from 30 to 50 feet high and cover 1,000 of the 1,900-mile southern border, with the rest of the expanse secured by natural barriers. To date, approximately 458 miles of wall were built to the tune of several billion U.S. taxpayer dollars before further construction was halted in 2021 because of cost and environmental concerns. Mexico, it should be noted, has yet to invest any money in building the border wall.

In the final year of his administration, Trump elected to downplay the severity of the coronavirus pandemic, saying he didn't want "to create a panic" even though the illness was spreading quickly across all regions of the U.S. at a cost of hundreds of

The aftershocks from the January 6, 2021 riot at the U.S. Capitol continue to occupy federal law enforcement officials.



thousands of lives. He later suggested that COVID-19 could be treated by injecting disinfectant into the body, a recommendation that was widely lambasted by infectious disease experts in the medical community as dangerously unsound.

After losing the 2020 presidential election to Joe Biden, Trump mounted a desperate attempt to overturn the results, inciting a mob on January 6, 2021 to storm the U.S. Capitol in a last-ditch effort to block the peaceful transfer of power, endangering the lives of more than a 100 law enforcement officers and hundreds of government officials including his own Vice President Mike Pence. Trump's actions led to his second impeachment and to a related round of criminal investigations that are pending.

Long before the riot at the Capitol and throughout his administration, Trump had to deal with a steady stream of key and respected personnel leaving his leadership ranks, many of whom roundly criticized him on the way out for lacking the moral fortitude, intellectual capacity, and adult sensibilities to lead a deeply divided nation. The allies-turned-critics included the likes of former Defense Secretary James Mattis, former White House National Security Adviser John Bolton, former Chief of Staff John Kelly, former White House Counsel Ty Cobb, and former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson.

With those four years as a backdrop, Vice President Kamala Harris became part of an administration that was tasked with curbing the spread of the coronavirus, setting in motion

an ongoing vaccination program to lessen the impact of COVID-19. She also encouraged people of all ages to follow social distancing guidelines and to wear masks in public gatherings until governmental health agencies issued an all-clear announcement.

The Biden-Harris administration then was faced with taming high inflation rates that were fueled principally by a massive surge in governmental spending during the pandemic. In response to the COVID-19 crisis in 2020, the federal government authorized an unprecedented \$5 trillion in pandemic response spending to keep the economy – and workers – afloat. The spending programs were the result of Republicans and Democrats displaying a sense of unity for the good of a nation in crisis.

Not surprisingly, while the pandemic was a decidedly national and global problem, dealing with inflation became a deeply partisan political issue, as higher interest rates coupled with tighter governmental spending were viewed as economic troubles caused by Democratic policies. In reality, the economic issues were inherited from the previous (Republican) administration that had the unfortunate challenge of initially dealing with the many uncertainties surrounding the pandemic.

Earlier this year, Vice President Harris also supported a bipartisan immigration reform package that appeared to have Senate approval before it was torpedoed by Trump-aligned legislators, who opposed the border compromise principally because Trump wants to campaign on the issue during the presidential race.

While the Vice President has been among the key supporters of ongoing military aid to Ukraine since it was invaded by Russia in February 2022, her election opponent has consistently objected to further assistance while also casting doubt on future U.S. involvement with the NATO alliance.

Former President Trump's reluctance to embrace NATO has shaken the faith of many American allies, as has his habit of dignifying the dictatorial handiwork of such tyrants as Russian President Vladimir Putin, North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un, Chinese President Xi Jinping, and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, regularly lavishing praise on them for their "brilliance" and their decisive leadership style that crushes individual freedoms and stifles political dissent.

So, as we attempt to digest the history of the past eight years – four under

Republican presidential leadership and four under Democratic, let's look ahead at what each party plans to do if they prevail at the polls on election day.

The Harris-Walz ticket has made a pledge to "push the country forward" instead of allowing the Trump-Vance duo to "pull the country back," promising to restore the federal right to reproductive freedoms, including abortion.

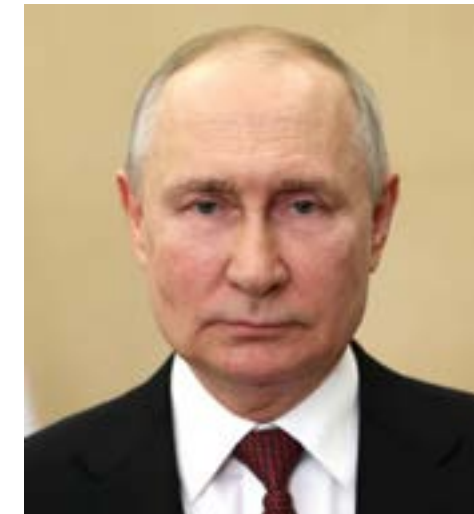
They also aim to build up the middle class, as "we fight for a future with affordable housing, affordable health

care, affordable childcare, and paid leave," Harris said at an August campaign rally where she underscored the continued importance of the Affordable Care Act.

On the issue of gun violence, Harris and Walz said they would work to pass universal background checks, red flag laws, and an assault weapon ban in hopes that stricter legislation would curb the spate of mass shootings plaguing the nation.

The Democratic candidates also said they will back legislation to enshrine

Clockwise from top left, Russian President Vladimir Putin, North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un, Chinese President Xi Jinping, and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban.



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voting rights, extending the protections guaranteed by the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

In addition, they support legislative measures to address climate change, urging the development of alternative energy sources over expanded oil, coal, and natural gas exploration and use. They view climate change as a public health issue that could evolve into a national security issue, impacting global stability.

By comparison, Trump and Vance have called for a national ban on abortion – including by medication, while also targeting birth control access and insurance coverage for contraceptives.

They also have promised to block any gun control legislation, labeling it as an unwarranted infringement on the 2nd Amendment right to bear arms.

As for the issue of climate change, Trump has said that it is a figment of the “radical left,” and that he will put an end to all electric vehicle mandates and will encourage oil companies to “drill, baby, drill.”

Additionally, the Trump-Vance ticket has urged their supporters to “guard the vote” on Election Day to prevent any fraud, while calling into question the integrity of the process and casting doubt on the results.

If elected, Trump has proclaimed that he wouldn’t be a dictator “except for Day One,” a day when he has threatened to seek retribution against his political foes. As soon as he takes office, Trump has promised to pardon all those convicted for participating in the January 6 uprising at the Capitol, labeling them as “political prisoners” wrongly jailed for exercising their 1st Amendment rights to free speech.

On “Day One,” he also has promised to “begin the largest deportation operation in American history,” deploying a “massive dragnet” to arrest and deport millions of undocumented migrants. It may be just the beginning of a “Project 2025” plan developed by the



Immigration and border security are among the key campaign issues in this year’s presidential race.



The stakes will be high when American voters cast their ballots in the November 5 election.

conservative Heritage Foundation to further consolidate executive power under hyper-conservative ideals at the expense of fundamental freedoms and liberties.

Which leaves us with several closing questions: Who do you want piloting the United States over the next four years? Is it Donald Trump and his co-pilot J.D. Vance or do you prefer the leadership combination of Kamala Harris and Tim Walz?


In this case, “We the People” will serve as the jury, assigned with the critical task of deciding who we want at the

controls as we approach a political crossroads unlike any we have seen.

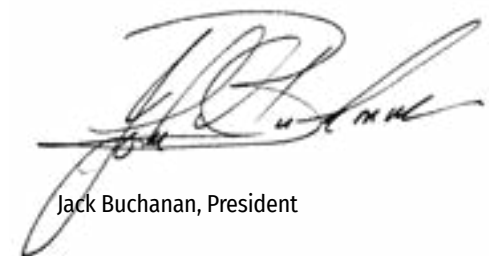
Thanks to the Founding Fathers, we have been entrusted with the privilege and enormous responsibility of exercising our right to vote, to freely choose leaders on November 5 who possess the smarts, skills, and character to guide the nation through turbulent times.

In addition, we have a duty to elect leaders who set aside self-interests for the good of the country and can articulate the value of political unity by building coalitions to address our most pressing problems.

These are the leaders a divided nation needs. This is the leadership that we deserve and demand.

On November 5, the choice for “We the People” is abundantly clear. 

Best regards,



Jack Buchanan, President

9/11



Adly Bellagha
Managing Partner
Adly Bellagha and Associates

One of America's darkest days emblazoned in the memories of Tunisian father and daughter

By Tom Kirvan

Tunisian attorney Adly Bellagha admits to being part of a melting pot, the term that for more than two centuries has been used to describe the composition of America, where diverse cultures and ethnicities have come together to help form the fabric of the nation.

Bellagha, whose mother was French and father was descended from the Ottoman Empire, has ties that bind with

the United States that extend far beyond the metaphor describing the fusion of nationalities. And his connection will be of the forever variety.

It began on a sun-splashed late summer day in Boston, more than a year after Wall Street braced for what many financial observers predicted would be a collective computer calamity associated with Y2K, the millennial transition which many feared had the potential to bring down

worldwide infrastructures for computer reliant industries.

While the Y2K scare proved to be much ado about nothing thanks to the pre-emptive efforts of computer programmers and information technology experts, an all-together different kind of global reckoning was about to be unleashed in tragic terms – 9/11.

The numbers, of course, tell a horrifying tale of death and destruction on that ill-fated September 11, 2001 day, particularly for anyone unfortunate enough to be on the East Coast at that time.

Count Bellagha and his then 20-year-old daughter, Rym, among them, two innocent 9/11 bystanders who suddenly were enveloped in the chaos that was unfolding across New York City, Washington, D.C., and

Boston, the origin city of the two jetliners that struck the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center complex.

The Bellaghas were in Boston at Boston Children's Hospital to seek help for a rare kidney condition that had plagued Rym for years and was feared could lead to kidney failure. The renowned medical facility is the primary teaching hospital for Harvard Medical School.

"She was suffering from a sickness in which her kidneys expelled all the (good) vitamins and proteins and things like that," Bellagha explained.

Their medical odyssey actually began several years earlier in France where a surgical procedure proved unsuccessful, eventually leading them to yet another operation in 2000 at Boston Children's Hospital. When that procedure ultimately failed to remedy her kidney problems,

father and daughter returned to the U.S. in September 2001 to try again.

“I had an American friend, Bill Martin, who gave us his flat to stay in while we were in Boston,” Bellagha said. “I met Bill when he came to Tunisia [for work].”

After his daughter underwent a series of tests on Monday, September 10 at the hospital, Bellagha returned with her the following morning at 8 o'clock for the surgical procedure, which was expected to take up to four hours.

By 9 a.m., Bellagha had returned to the flat to await the surgical results and to map plans for their trip home to Tunisia when he received word that “something happened” in New York.

“So, I switched on the TV just as the second aircraft hit (the World Trade Center),” Bellagha related. “I couldn't believe my eyes. I thought it was a replay of the earlier plane, but then I realized it was a second jet that had crashed into the building.”

After digesting the magnitude of the news that was rocking the nation, Bellagha hustled back to the hospital to be with his daughter, where they soon encountered reports that both towers of the World Trade Center had collapsed and that the U.S. was preparing a possible nuclear response to the terrorist attacks.

“People at the hospital and around Boston were very scared,” Bellagha recalled. “People were screaming. It was a real state of panic all afternoon.”

The tension and uncertainty were heightened even more when Boston police swarmed a nearby hotel where they investigated a possible bomb on the premises, according to Bellagha.

“It was said that a dog smelled a bomb, but it turned out to be nothing, just two Middle Eastern men staying at the hotel who suddenly looked suspicious,” said Bellagha of the incident, which was indicative of some of the hysteria that would grip the nation in the aftermath of 9/11.

In the meantime, Bellagha shifted his focus to the welfare of his daughter, who was in recovery mode after undergoing successful kidney surgery. His mission then was to ensure her safe and comfortable return home, a task that was becoming increasingly difficult as airports around the world began tightening security measures in the wake of the 9/11 hijackings.

“When the skies opened up on Saturday, we registered our luggage for Paris and Tunis, only to be notified at the airport that there was a change,” Bellagha related. “We were told that there was no direct flight from Boston to Paris, that we would have to go through New York. We said, okay, fine. We went to New York. It was incredible, as the towers were still smoking.”

Upon landing at John F. Kennedy International Airport, Bellagha and his daughter soon found out that they would be rerouted yet again, this time to Rome and then Paris before their final destination of Tunis. En route, Bellagha discovered that the airlines were not yet equipped to deal with the post-9/11 world of traveling, routinely handing out knives and forks accompanying meals for business class passengers.

“I even asked for a bottle of champagne, which the stewardess brought,” Bellagha vividly recalled. “You know how thick the glass is in a bottle of champagne? So, I said, it's easy to break and to kill, just as it would be to use the plastic knives and forks (as weapons).”

As a native of Tunisia, the northernmost country in Africa that is bordered by Algeria and Libya, Bellagha had long grown accustomed to a tighter form of security protocol at airports in his region.

“We are familiar with that sort of situation, when there has been a destabilization, and a curfew has been enacted requiring you to go home until six or eight in the morning,” he said. “Of course, taking actions like that in a country of 12 million people is far different than in a country of 300 million people like the United States.”

Bellagha, who studied law at the prestigious Pantheon-Sorbonne University in Paris, has long held a global view of life. This fact has contributed to the growth and success of his law firm, Adly Bellagha and Associates in Tunis, the capital city with a metro population of 2.5 million residents.

The firm, which was founded by his late father Lamine in 1952, handles family law cases, alternative dispute resolution, banking and corporate law litigation, mergers and acquisitions, and international business law matters.

“I worked with my father for 18 years,” said Bellagha, who earned his law degree in 1975. “He was my legal mentor. Mr. Daly Jazy also was a mentor of mine. He was a political activist for democracy. Daly introduced me to the defense of political prisoners.”

Bellagha said his father, who retired at age 90, was a legal force for good in Tunisia.

“Although I would occasionally tell him that ‘you killed my youth,’ because I became a lawyer at age 22, got married at age 25, and became a father at age 27,” Bellagha said with a smile.

In college, Bellagha had aspirations of becoming an economist before deciding

An opportunity for a family photo highlighted the 70th birthday celebration for Tunis attorney Adly Bellagha (center). Pictured with Adly (l-r) are granddaughter Lyna, daughter Rym, daughter Sarah, and granddaughter Leyla.



to pursue a career in the law instead. One of his proudest career achievements came when “I handled my first syndicated loan when I was 28,” he said.

During his early years in the legal profession, Bellagha realized the need to develop his language skills in Arabic and English. To that end, he attended a special language proficiency school in Tunisia to improve his Arabic and later moved to England for a time to learn more about the common law system and further develop his English skills.

“As you know, English is the worldwide language,” Bellagha declared. “So, if you don't know English, you know nothing when it comes to handling international business matters.”

Bellagha now speaks four languages (Arabic, English, French, and Italian), a skill he passed along to his two daughters, Rym and Sarah, ages 43 and 40, respectively.

Rym and her husband have one daughter and live in Tunis. Sarah resides in the United Kingdom with her husband and their daughter. Sarah, who earned her college degree while studying in London, now works in finance for a Japanese company that specializes in renewable energy services across Europe.


At age 70, Bellagha shows no signs of slowing down, even though he often is tempted by the lure of his passion for yachting at his villa on the Mediterranean Sea.

In fact, he said, a veteran lawyer “like me can't retire as a client brings

other clients because you are well known – or at least known” in the legal and business communities.

“As lawyers, our job is very interesting because of the variety of things that we handle – construction, energy, and financing,” he said. “If you are a curious person, you learn a lot.”

He also has another motivation for continuing to work – his 11-year-old granddaughter, Lyna, has professed an interest in someday joining the firm that Bellagha has built.

“I have to stay until she graduates (from law school),” Bellagha said with a wide smile. “That would be a dream come true for me.” 

Sound waves

Greenberg Glusker 'in-house band' makes the grade at Law Rocks L.A. event

By Brian Cox

It's a Saturday night and the famed Whisky a Go Go is packed.

The legendary club on the Sunset Strip in West Hollywood is the venue for the 13th Annual Law Rocks Los Angeles, a charity event featuring 14 law firm bands over two nights.

The crowd stands shoulder-to-shoulder and is in high spirits around the stage as the event's emcee announces, "So now, your final band of the night – The Gee Gees!"

The audience screams and hollers and the in-house band from the law firm Greenberg Glusker hits the opening chords of "The Chain" by Fleetwood Mac. At the front of the stage, lead guitarist and entertainment attorney Ricardo Cestero overhears someone in the audience say, "Are they really going to pull this off?"

From the confident, smooth harmonies struck in the first lyrics by Graham Fenton, Ryan Webb, and Linda DeBella, it is immediately evident that yes, The Gee Gees are going to "pull this off."

Despite it being their inaugural appearance at Law Rocks, the band, in fact, won the Judge's Choice Award for best overall performance of the two-night event.

"Our hope was that we were going to be the best band," says Cestero, the band's de facto leader who has performed in cover bands around Los Angeles for decades. "That was the goal. To just go out there and put on the best show."

The band members describe the experience as a "real thrill" and a "bucket list item."

"To get a chance to play at the Whisky in front of that crowd was nothing short of surreal," says drummer Pete Nyquist, who is chair of the firm's Environmental Practice Group and a founding member of the band. "What greater dream is there than to be a rocker, get up on stage, and perform?"

The comments were echoed by Cestero, a 1999 UCLA School of Law grad who earned his bachelor's degree from Oberlin College.

"We made the show when we played that gig," says Cestero. "We knew we needed to highlight what makes us different and what makes us a unique band. One of the things we have is Graham and Ryan, who are excellent singers."

It helps when you have two lawyers who have professional backgrounds in music.

The Gee Gees boast the versatile vocals of lead singers Graham Fenton and Ryan Webb, as well as the deft bass playing of Ira Steinberg. Fenton and Webb have professional backgrounds in music and performance.





Greenberg Glusker's in-house band The Gee Gees celebrates winning the Judge's Choice Award for Best Overall Performance at the 13th Annual Law Rocks Los Angeles. The band consists of (l-r) Jim Hill, Ryan Webb, Ricardo Cestero, Linda Debella, Graham Fenton, Ira Steinberg, Peter Nyquist, and Noah Perch-Ahern.

Prior to graduating from law school and joining the firm four years ago, Graham Fenton spent nearly 10 years starring as rock icon Frankie Valli in the Broadway musical "Jersey Boys," with more than 1,300 performances in Las Vegas, New York, a U.S. National Tour, and Australia. When the show closed at the Paris Las Vegas in 2016, Fenton decided to launch a new career as an entertainment lawyer.

"I'm so glad I made the change," Fenton says. "Now I get to rock out with the wonderful Gee Gees."

Ryan Webb grew up around music. His father, Doug Webb, is an accomplished jazz saxophonist who has been featured on more than 150 jazz recordings and has recorded music for movies and television programs. Ryan spent many a weekend in his dad's basement playing the drums.

"Despite his valiant attempts to have me follow in his footsteps and play saxophone, I gravitated to the drums," says Webb. "My dad always joked, 'what do you call a guy who hangs out with musicians? A drummer.' Ultimately, much to my father's chagrin, I decided to become a lawyer."

A partner in the firm's Entertainment Group, Webb specializes in negotiating and structuring sophisticated rights and service deals for multihyphenate creators. He still makes time for music, though.

"I've always got gigs happening somewhere," he says.

His father, Doug, joined The Gee Gees on stage at the Whisky for the set's final three songs and "blew the roof off the joint" with his saxophone solo in "Money" by Pink Floyd.

Most of the bands that performed for Law Rocks are hybrid, bringing together lawyers from different national firms. The Gee Gees are unique in that its members are all from the same firm.

The Gee Gees formed in 2015 when David Cranston, the founder of the firm's Environmental Group, went to see Cestero play with his longtime cover band Everyday Housewives. Cestero started playing guitar when he was 12 and has been performing in one band or another since he was a freshman in high school. Cranston encouraged Cestero to start a firm band that could play at the firm's annual retreat. Cestero recruited Nyquist to play drums and business litigator Ira Steinberg to play bass. He pulled in another lawyer who played guitar, one who played keyboards, and – surprisingly – one who was a world-class bagpipe player.

At the firm retreat at Ojai Valley Inn that year, the band made its debut appearance, marching in to the serenade of Scottish bagpiping before ripping into "It's a Long Way to the Top (If You Wanna Rock 'N' Roll)" by AC/DC.

The band rehearsed weekly in a full-fledged music studio Cestero built above his garage.

"We were able to get together and do our practice jams," recalls Nyquist. "All the band members would have been more than happy to do that as often as we could. That's always been a really great part of the process."

In its current form, The Gee Gees consists of original members Cestero, Steinberg, and Nyquist, as well as fellow attorneys Fenton, Webb, Noah Perch-Ahern, and Jim Hill. Perch-Ahern, who practices in the firm's Environmental Group, plays guitar and business litigator Hill sits at the keyboards.

Singer-songwriter Linda Debella, who is also Cestero's longtime girlfriend, rounds out the group.

"We all bring a little something," says Nyquist of the band's makeup.

"It's pretty incredible that we have this collection of really talented musicians," says Webb, "because we're not that large of a firm."

"I think we do a good job of picking stuff that is going to highlight what we do well," says Cestero. "At Law Rocks, we wanted to play songs that would utilize the vocal abilities of Graham, Ryan, and Linda."


After opening with "The Chain," The Gee Gees went on to perform over the next 30 minutes, entertaining the crowd with covers of "867-5309/Jenny" by Tommy Tutone, "Harder to Breathe" by Maroon 5, "Money," "Ain't No Mountain High Enough" by Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell, and "Jet Airliner" by Steve Miller Band.

A key to The Gee Gees' sound and success is the warm familiarity of the band of lawyer-musicians.

"If you like the people you play with, you're going to have more fun and you're going to put more passion into it," says Cestero.

"The firm successfully raised over \$19,000 for both Law Rocks charities and in support of its chosen charity, Alliance for Children's Rights," according to a Greenberg Glusker press release. Overall, Law Rocks pulled in more than \$416,000 at the Los Angeles weekend, breaking the previous all-time Law Rocks record for a single event.

The Gee Gees plan to return to Law Rocks Los Angeles next year for their sophomore performance.

After all, they have a title to defend. 



The Gee Gees raised more than \$19,000 for both Law Rocks charities and in support of Alliance for Children's Rights. Overall the charity event pulled in more than \$416,000.

Preordained

Istanbul attorney pivots deftly after a tragic loss

By Brian Cox



Muhsin Hakan Kavasoğlu
Managing Partner
Kavasoğlu Law Firm



Ever since Muhsin Hakan Kavasoğlu (left) was young, he always envisioned joining the Kavasoğlu Law Firm, which his parents, Ahmet Vedat Kavasoğlu (center) and Muhsine Tülin founded in Bursa, Turkey, in 1987.

Destiny often arrives unexpectedly and occasionally earlier than anticipated.

Attorney Muhsin Hakan Kavasoğlu, the second-generation partner of Kavasoğlu Law Firm, always planned to join the boutique firm his parents founded in Bursa, Turkey. His ambitious plans included transforming it into a corporate firm, expanding its areas of expertise and influence by attracting international clients, and opening a second office in Istanbul. First, though, he intended to practice at a larger law firm for a dozen or so years to gain wider, valuable experience.

That plan was disrupted when Kavasoğlu's father died in February 2020 after a five-year battle with cancer.

At the time of his father's death, Kavasoğlu had been working at Hergüner Bilgen Özeke Attorney Partnership, one of the largest and most prominent corporate law firms in Turkey, for almost eight years.

"My father always joked about my working with another law firm," says Kavasoğlu with a smile. "He frequently asked me, 'What is your salary? I can pay it. Come work for me.'"

Though Kavasoğlu never discussed succession plans with his parents, it was clear to him after his father's death that his mother would need help running the firm that she and her husband had started in 1987. Ahmet Vedat Kavasoğlu and Muhsine Tülin had attended competing law schools – he, the Istanbul Faculty of Law and she, Ankara University of Law, but they met in Bursa during their

one-year internships before qualifying to practice law.

Together, the newly married lawyers built Kavasoğlu Law Firm, concentrating on transaction-based projects and dispute resolution. Over the years, the firm established a stellar reputation for providing high-end legal services to international and domestic clients.

"The firm was a boutique law firm, but they were highly regarded at their practice," says Kavasoğlu. "I admired them. I still admire my mother. She's a very talented lawyer."

Kavasoğlu grew up around the firm. He remembers clearly as a young child his parents discussing cases at home and he often spent afternoons after school at his parents' office. Perhaps it was his early

exposure to law and his parents' influence that led Kavasoğlu to decide at an early age to become a lawyer.

"I liked what I saw," he says with a laugh.

Born and raised in Bursa, Kavasoğlu moved to Istanbul after primary school to attend Galatasaray High School. Established in 1481, this institution is one of Turkey's most prestigious and historic educational establishments with notable alumni, including several Turkish prime ministers, diplomats, and prominent figures in academia and the arts. After graduation, he earned his law degree from Galatasaray University and then spent a year in England pursuing an LLM at King's College London.

In 2014, he returned to Istanbul and joined Hergüner, where he gained in-depth knowledge and experience in real estate, international trade, funds and trusts, and mergers and acquisitions.

"My parents were very supportive during college and my first years of practice," says Kavasoğlu. "I always had someone to consult with on a regular basis."

In 2020, following his father's passing and driven by his dream and ultimate goal, as well as the will to support his mother, he left Hergüner to open the Istanbul office of his family firm. What began as a family firm has now grown into a practice with two offices, specializing in corporate and international trade law, as well as logistics, real estate, and employment law.

"I felt the necessity to help my mother," he says of his decision to leave Hergüner and open an Istanbul office of his family's firm. "I felt I could take over so that's what I did. And it's turned out pretty good for us."

As he took on the responsibility of helping to manage the family law firm, he sought to combine the best practices of a large

firm with the personal attention of a boutique firm, offering clients diligence, creativity, and effectiveness.

"The boutique mindset is the key from my perspective," says Kavasoğlu. "It entails being highly responsive and adaptive, delivering personalized and attentive service, and managing cases with greater efficiency."

A client-centric approach and integrity are the top two values that anchor Kavasoğlu Law Firm.

"We do our work under an umbrella of integrity," says Kavasoğlu. "Upholding the highest standards of conduct is our personal pledge; ensuring that the legal profession remains a noble and respected field."

Kavasoğlu Law Firm became a Primerus member earlier this year. Kavasoğlu was looking for a network of law firms



Mushin Hakan Kavasoğlu would be thrilled if his daughter Leyla grew to share his love for horses. He has been riding horses competitively since he was 7.



Turkish attorney Muhsin Hakan Kavasoğlu and his 3-year-old daughter, Leyla, pay a visit to his show horse, Gentilhomme.



Mushin Hakan Kavasoğlu and his wife, Piril, with his show horse, Gentilhomme. The couple enjoys traveling and have traveled extensively across Europe.

that could help meet the expanding international needs of his clients.

"When we tried to find lawyers abroad to get help in their jurisdiction, we were struggling a little bit," he says. "We decided to find a network that has lawyers around the globe that work on our standards. Primerus was the definition of it."

"Our target clientele are the corporations who are working with large firms but often feel overlooked and struggle to access specialized expertise," says Kavasoğlu. "When we step in, our clients often tell us that our agility, responsiveness, and close personal contact far exceed what they experience with larger firms."

Kavasoğlu and his wife, Piril, have a 3-year-old daughter, Leyla. He and Piril enjoy traveling and try to go abroad every few months. They have traveled

extensively across Europe and have visited Los Angeles (which Kavasoğlu loved) and New York (which he found a bit chaotic for a holiday destination).


"Culture is what makes people," he says. "Meeting people from different parts of the world, with diverse backgrounds and traditions, and experiencing their lives, even if briefly, is incredibly valuable to me." He fondly recalls their trips to Japan and Cuba as "once-in-a-lifetime experiences."

In addition to being a lawyer, Kavasoğlu is an accomplished equestrian who regularly competes in show jumping with his 8-year-old horse, Gentilhomme ("Gentleman" in French). He began riding when he was 7 and has competed across Turkey in most age and height classes, including the highest 150-cm fence heights.

"I love riding horses," he says. "It takes all your bad energy and fills you with positive light."

He draws a clear connection between his equestrian pursuits and the practice of law.

"It's not up to you if you win the race or the show – it's mostly up to the horse," he explains. "But you have to be perfect to give the horse the opportunity to showcase its qualities. Similarly, in law, sometimes it's the circumstances of the case that mostly determine the outcome. Yet, you must perform at your best to secure the most favorable outcome for your client within those conditions."

Performing at a high level is an expectation Kavasoğlu places upon himself going forward as he works to realize his vision for Kavasoğlu Law Firm and fulfill his destiny. 

Turkey

A vibrant country where continents converge


Long known as the “crossroads of civilization,” Turkey for centuries has been the bridge between Europe and Asia, a country where East meets West in a kaleidoscope of cultures.

Located partly in Asia and partly in Europe, Turkey is bounded on the north by the Black Sea, on the northeast by Georgia and Armenia, on the east by Azerbaijan and Iran, on the southeast by Iraq and Syria, on the southwest and west by the Mediterranean Sea and Aegean Sea, and on the northwest by Greece and Bulgaria. A true crossroads of cultures, landscapes, and beliefs.

With a population of more than 86 million, Turkey is a mostly mountainous country with its highest peak, Mount Ararat (16,854 feet), a dormant volcano described in the Bible as the resting place of Noah’s Ark. Istanbul, the country’s most populous city with 15.4 million inhabitants, serves as its economic and financial center. Its strategic geographic location helps link Europe with Iran, the Arabian Peninsula, Africa, Russia, and the Mediterranean Basin.

Steeped in history, Turkey is home to countless sights of the Byzantine and Ottoman eras, including Ephesus, a city of colossal monuments and marble-column lined roads that was once one of the most important cities in the ancient

Mediterranean world. The ancient city of Troy, the legendary setting for Homer’s epic poems the “Iliad” and the “Odyssey,” is also a popular archaeological site in the northwest section of the country, drawing tens of thousands of visitors each year.

The country also is the birthplace of the famous Turkish baths, otherwise known as hammams, generally located in beautiful buildings with marble interiors and domed ceilings and serving as must-visit destinations for travelers from around the world. For those who prefer a more natural setting, Turkey features some of the region’s most beautiful beaches, where mountains intersect with the sea in spectacular fashion. 

Known worldwide for its distinctive “fairy chimneys,” Cappadocia features some of the most beautiful rock formations in Turkey.

Five Must-See Destinations:

1. Istanbul: No visit to Turkey is complete without experiencing Istanbul, the fifth largest city in the world. This vibrant city, which straddles two continents, offers a blend of ancient and modern attractions. Visit the Blue Mosque, Topkapi Palace, and take a leisurely cruise on the Bosphorus Strait. One of the most iconic religious sites is the Hagia Sophia. Originally built as a Christian basilica, it was later converted into a mosque and is now a museum. The Grand Bazaar, with its labyrinthine alleys and myriad shops, is a paradise for both shoppers and non-shoppers alike, offering a glimpse into the city’s mercantile past.

2. Cappadocia: Known for its unique rock formations and cave dwellings,

Cappadocia is a surreal landscape that looks like it’s straight out of a fairy tale. The best way to experience its beauty is from above, in a hot air balloon ride at sunrise. The Göreme Open-Air Museum, a UNESCO World Heritage site, showcases ancient rock-cut churches with stunning frescoes.

3. Pamukkale: Meaning “Cotton Castle” in Turkish, Pamukkale is a natural wonder famous for its white travertine terraces and thermal waters. Another UNESCO World Heritage site, the mineral-rich waters have been used for therapeutic purposes since Roman times. Adjacent to Pamukkale is the ancient city of Hierapolis, where you can explore well-preserved ruins, including a grand theatre and a necropolis.

4. Antalya: Located on the Mediterranean coast, Antalya is known for its stunning beaches, historic old town (Kaleiçi), and the impressive Antalya Museum. The nearby Düden Waterfalls and the ancient city of Termessos offer natural beauty and historical intrigue. Antalya is also the gateway to the Turquoise Coast, perfect for sailing and other water sports.

5. Troy: Immortalized by Homer’s epic poem, “The Iliad,” Troy is one of the most legendary archaeological sites in the world. Excavations have revealed layers of settlements dating back to the Bronze Age. A wooden Trojan Horse, a symbol of the ancient tale, stands at the city’s entrance, inviting visitors to step into history.

TURKEY



Honor – Hospitality – Honesty

FAST FACTS:

Languages: Turkish

Religions: Islam, Christianity, Judaism

Capital: Ankara

Population: 86.1 million

Must-see Attractions: Cappadocia rock formations

Primerus Member: Kavasoglu Law Firm

Based in Istanbul, the Kavasoglu Law Firm was founded in 1987 and provides legal services in transaction-based projects and dispute resolution.



Once fired, founder of award-winning media production company headlines keynote speakers at Primerus Global Conference

By Tom Kirvan

The Grand River, the longest inland waterway in Michigan, cuts through the heart of Grand Rapids.

Cynthia Kay, who, as an applied voice student at Michigan State University, harbored dreams of making it big in musical theater, took a detour into the world of television broadcasting instead, ultimately becoming a do-it-all *tour de force* at a pair of Michigan TV stations in Kalamazoo and her hometown of Grand Rapids.

In the span of 13 years during the 1970s and '80s, Kay made her own share of headlines for her flair as a writer, investigative reporter, news anchor, program producer, and engaging talk show host, winning more than 30 awards from the Associated Press and United Press International in addition to a slew of honors from various regional and local organizations.

"I was at the top of my game," she said of her high-flying days as one of the most respected and recognizable TV personalities in West Michigan.

Until she was not, suddenly and unceremoniously cast aside by the invariably cruel nature of the broadcast business where cost-cutting has become a regrettable artform.

"I got fired, which, if you know anything about broadcasting, is not unusual," Kay said of the abrupt end to her local television career. "They said I was making 'too much money,' literally."

The firing, unwarranted and painful as it was, "proved to be the best thing that ever happened to me," Kay declared. "Strange as that may sound, getting fired really couldn't have turned out any better for me."

The byproduct of being pink-slipped was that it sparked a long dormant urge to start her own business, Kay acknowledged. She also noted that having a great lawyer helped her obtain a settlement from the



Cynthia Kay
President and Founder
CK & CO

station, using the money to jumpstart her business.

“I had been freelancing for a while and always thought that I would open a business, I just didn’t think I’d do it that soon,” she said with a laugh. “It certainly provided the impetus to get going.”

And in a hurry, as she quickly put her experience as a TV storyteller to good use, founding Cynthia Kay and Company (CK and CO), a media production agency based in Grand Rapids that serves a growing global clientele.

Since its founding in 1987, the company has served a range of corporations from the Global Fortune 100 to a number of smaller businesses and nonprofit organizations. The list includes the likes of Siemens, Cisco Technologies, Nestlé, Dematic, USA Jet, Wiley Publishing, Bradford White, and Primerus among countless others.

Kay’s work with Primerus, which began years ago and then ramped up in recent years when the company started producing videos for the organization’s revamped website, will take on another dimension this fall when she appears as a keynote speaker at the 2024 Global Conference in Asheville, N.C.

The annual event will be staged at the Omni Grove Park Inn in Asheville, October 16-20, and is expected to attract hundreds of Primerus attorneys from all corners of the world. Nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Grove Park Inn has a storied history as one of the finest hotels in the country and has welcomed 10 U.S. Presidents since opening in 1913 under the watch of founder Edwin Wiley Grove, owner of the Paris Medicine Company.

When Kay steps into the Primerus spotlight at the Global Conference this fall, she is expected to deliver a message



sprinkled with lessons learned over the course of a career that has made her a guiding force for the National Small Business Association (NSBA), as well as the Small Business Association of Michigan (SBAM).

Kay, who earned her master’s degree in communications from Western Michigan University while working full-time at a TV station in Kalamazoo, has chaired the boards of both small business organizations and inspired many aspiring entrepreneurs to do better and reach higher.

Her list of admirers includes Brian Calley, former lieutenant governor of Michigan and current SBAM president and CEO. In a testimonial for her most recent book (see sidebar on page 38), Calley gives Kay a royal salute for her business insight and brilliance.

“Whether you’ve got an idea ready to grow or are looking for inspiration to take a new step in your business, this book will ignite your entrepreneurial spirit,” wrote Calley, a former state legislator who served two terms as lieutenant governor. “A fantastic resource for businesses of all stages.”

Todd McCracken, NSBA president and CEO, echoed the comments in the foreword to Kay’s book.

“Serving as our board chair in 2018, Cynthia played a critical role in our five-year strategic planning process and was a champion for NSBA, creating a new group for emerging small-business leaders called the NSBA Leadership Council,” McCracken said. “Five years later, that council had nearly 1,000 members and is extremely engaged and active. Cynthia embodies the spirit of who we are: a solution-oriented organization focused on small business and dedicated to consensus building.

“To have a force like Cynthia on your side – even when it may push you beyond your comfort zone – is akin to harnessing the wind,” McCracken added. “As a beloved author once said, ‘Oh the places you’ll go . . .’”

The book is Kay’s third and will soon spawn a fourth that will dig into a topic that business owners struggle with for years – the decision to stay on or leave their business. Unlike the typical succession planning book, Kay explores how to balance emotional readiness and

good decision-making to ensure what is profitable and “feeds the soul.”

Staying in touch with your customers is basic “Business 101,” said Kay, and was an important lesson imparted by her father, Gus, a CPA and Aquinas College grad whose parents immigrated to the U.S. from Greece.

“I come from a background of small business owners,” Kay related. “My dad, after he came back from the war, was in business with his two brothers, starting Afendoulis Cleaners in 1945. He was a significant influence in my life. In fact, my sister (Vicki), my brother (Steve), and I have all owned our own businesses.”

The success of her business is grounded on a love for the work coupled with a “can-do” attitude and the willingness to place trust in others, messages that she

reinforces during frequent “huddles” with her hand-picked staff of 10 “talented and dedicated” employees. They, she wrote in her book, “are individuals who share my love of small business, and they prove it every day” when they tackle yet another challenging project.

“One of the keys to growing a business is to be a strong communicator, to consistently deliver a message that helps you connect and communicate with your customers, your clients, and your staff,” Kay noted. “It’s vitally important to keep all of them informed and engaged so that they feel valued and feel heard. Studies show that 86 percent of failure within the workplace is due to poor communication and poor collaboration.”

Dynamic communication, in fact, may well serve as the theme of Kay’s presentation at the Global Conference, which figures to

draw a crowd that is eager to learn from one of the masters of the profession.

“It’s an honor to be among the keynoters, and I will do my best to make my opportunity interesting,” Kay promised, maintaining that one of her smartest moves in business was to “hire a good lawyer, because a lot of small business owners don’t know what they don’t know.”

Without hesitation, Kay said she has developed a “special affinity” for Primerus.

“We’re very much aligned in our philosophies, of being small but mighty and doing quality work,” she said of the similarities. “I mean, it’s like we wrote the same handbook.”



A lifelong love of music, which is currently manifested in her role as the director of her church choir, has helped provide Cynthia Kay with a strong voice on a variety of personal and professional levels. As such, she has become a much sought-after speaker for businesses and organizations scattered across the country, gladly sharing her thoughts on how to make a big impact.

Book can serve as a template for the small business owner

By Tom Kirvan

An acclaimed author, Cynthia Kay delights in sharing her secrets to business success.



Call it a blueprint, a roadmap, or simply part three of a series.

Better yet, label it as a ticket to “Big Success” for fledgling entrepreneurs or small business owners contemplating the next step in their career evolution.

Whatever the case, entrepreneur and author Cynthia Kay has earned plenty of plaudits for her latest opus, smartly titled “Small Business, Big Success.”

The book, published earlier this year by Massachusetts-based Career Press, comes with a subtitle, “Proven Strategies to Beat the Odds and Grow a Great Business,” which Kay has deftly and creatively done over the past 37 years since founding her

media production company in the fall of 1987.

But there was some history to unpack first, Kay acknowledged, reflecting on a time in her youth when she got her first taste of hard work.

“My experience in business began long before I started (my) company,” Kay wrote in the intro to her book. “It began in the backroom of a dry-cleaning establishment.”

The business was owned by her dad and his two brothers, descendants of Greek immigrants who came to the U.S. in search of a better life.

“I can remember working at the cleaners from the time I was old enough to follow directions,” Kay recalled. “Every Saturday, Dad would take my sister, younger brother, and me to the store. While he did paperwork or caught up on loads of clothing in need of attention, we would check in the dirty clothes, put paper inserts on hangers, and clean the store. That was my first foray into business, and, believe me, there was no better feeling than having the run of the store.”

“As I got older, I worked my way up to being a counter girl, my first sales experience,” Kay fondly remembered. “Then I was able to open and close the place, my first management experience.”

It was then that the seeds were planted that would blossom into a thriving business of her own.

“My parents were definitely ahead of their time,” Kay declared. “In an era when most Greek parents wanted their daughters to ‘get married and have babies’ (yes, that famous line from ‘My Big Fat Greek Wedding’ is very accurate), my parents wanted us to go to school, get educated, and have careers. But to be clear, my dad did not want us to go into the family business; he wanted us to achieve more. So, we did.”

Of course, success didn’t come easy or without sacrifice, Kay admitted. There were tight times, long hours, minor and

major missteps, and various periods of self-doubt. But through all the highs and lows, Kay was reminded of why she took her business “leap of faith.”

“Like countless others, I dreamed about having more control over my life and career,” she said emphatically. “I wanted to own my own business, run it, and grow it.”

In that leadership role, she stressed, it is vitally important “to model what you want people to be” each day.

“You can’t just talk about it,” said Kay. “You have to be that person you say you are. You have to do it with every decision you make, with every action you take. Then

everyone will know you’re serious about achieving success.”

And her book is all about that, she noted.

“‘Small Business, Big Success’ provides proven strategies to achieve success from starting up to stepping out,” Kay said. “They are logical, clear, understandable, and easy to act upon. The early chapters help lay the foundation for what it takes to build and grow a small business that is healthy, efficient, and a great place to work. If you don’t get this right, you will become a statistic – one of the many businesses that does not make it past the five-year mark.”

A rapid rise to the top of the Wisconsin Bar for Milwaukee lawyer

By Tom Kirvan

When Milwaukee attorney Ryan Billings was chosen as president-elect of the State Bar of Wisconsin in late April, he was under the assumption that he would have a year in waiting before taking the leadership reins of the 25,000-plus-member organization.

That was the plan until the incoming president-elect, family law attorney Jane Bucher, accepted a gubernatorial appointment to a circuit court seat, thereby preventing her from ascending to the presidency of the State Bar.

Consequently, as of July 1, meet Ryan Billings, the new president of the State Bar.

“In effect, I’ll have had the shortest president-elect term in history,” Billings said with a grin concerning his accelerated rise to the top of the State Bar.

“It’s sort of a glass half-full situation because it’s [typically] a three-year commitment,” Billings indicated of his leadership role. “You spend a year as president-elect, one year as president, and one year as past-president. So, the duration has shortened, but the intensity has increased somewhat dramatically.”

Don’t expect that to faze Billings, who has an Ivy League educational pedigree with a bachelor’s degree in philosophy from Princeton University and a juris doctor from Harvard Law School. After graduating from Harvard in 2004, Billings spent six years working in New York City before returning to his home state of Wisconsin. Enjoying the collegiality of the Wisconsin Bar, Billings became interested in getting more involved in bar leadership.

He is particularly excited about his upcoming term as State Bar president, during which he aims to make a difference



Ryan Billings
Business Litigation Chair
Kohner, Mann & Kailas, S.C.



Photo courtesy of State Bar of Wisconsin Attorney Ryan Billings during a presentation on a Bail Reform Policy meeting of the Board of Governors for the State Bar of Wisconsin.

for the betterment of the legal profession and those who depend upon it.

“Although every lawyer’s situation is unique, there are common challenges facing Wisconsin lawyers, including the increasing stress placed on lawyers by today’s non-stop work environment,” Billings wrote during his campaign for the president-elect office. “Lawyers are expected to be always available, a situation exacerbated by the blurring of work and home life resulting from the pandemic.

“I am appalled by studies and surveys reflecting the rising number of lawyers experiencing excessive stress, burnout, anxiety, depression, and often-related chemical and alcohol dependence,” wrote Billings. “We must do more to foster an environment in which those who take up the mantle of serving as lawyers are not destroyed by their careers ... I will

work to raise awareness and help provide resources to assist Wisconsin-licensed lawyers in dealing with the many stresses of a legal career.”

Billings, whose involvement with the State Bar began when he was elected to the Board of Governors representing Milwaukee County, also plans to address the challenge of eliminating so-called “legal deserts” in various parts of the state.

“Another common challenge is the increasingly dire shortage of lawyers in places where they are needed most, including rural Wisconsin lawyers, criminal lawyers, and lawyers serving those who cannot afford legal services,” Billings declared. “The State Bar should be a force to help us meet these crises head on.”

“Important to that fight will be the responsible use of emerging tools like

AI (artificial intelligence), remote-work, and automation platforms that improve efficiency, ease the everyday grind, and allow us to focus on critical thinking and problem-solving,” he added. “My role will be to listen, help develop and direct resources, and build partnerships that can address these challenges long after my term is over.”

As State Bar president, Billings also vows to help make the legal profession a “force for good” in society.

“We live in an increasingly polarized world,” Billings proclaimed. “Lawyers can and should be an important force for measured, robust civil discourse that builds communities rather than tearing them apart and harnesses the crucible of the adversarial system to promote truth and justice. My experience and even-keeled temperament make me well suited to build bridges between

people with differing backgrounds and perspectives.”

During his one-year term as president, Billings expects to be on the road quite frequently, canvassing cities and counties across the state to hear from those involved in local bar associations, along with meeting with State Bar leaders at its headquarters in the capital city of Madison.

“I’m looking forward to getting out there and having the opportunity to meet with people across greater Wisconsin, getting their views on some of the important issues facing the legal profession,” said Billings.

As an avid camper and proud member of the National Eagle Scout Association, Billings looks forward to the chance to visit new places and tour Wisconsin’s scenic beauty in connection with this work.

Another issue certain to be on the minds of those he meets is the growing number of baby boomer lawyers who are retiring from the legal profession.

“They are retiring faster than younger lawyers are replacing them,” Billings said of the quandary of how best to deal with the impending shortage.

“It will put a lot of financial pressure on the bar in terms of membership dues, rising costs, and ways to balance the budget,” he explained. “A lawyer shortage, especially in outlying areas of the state, also creates access to justice issues for residents of those communities.”

Membership in the Wisconsin Bar is mandatory for each licensed lawyer in the state, Billings said, and “we are considered to be one of the best compulsory bars in the nation, a trendsetter in a lot of ways.”

He attributes much of its success to the State Bar’s administrative team, led by Executive Director Larry Martin.


“He’s amazing. He’s tireless. He has an incredibly busy schedule, but he finds time to talk with anybody,” Billings said of Martin, who has been with the State Bar in various key roles since 2011. “He’s always open-minded and a problem-solver.”

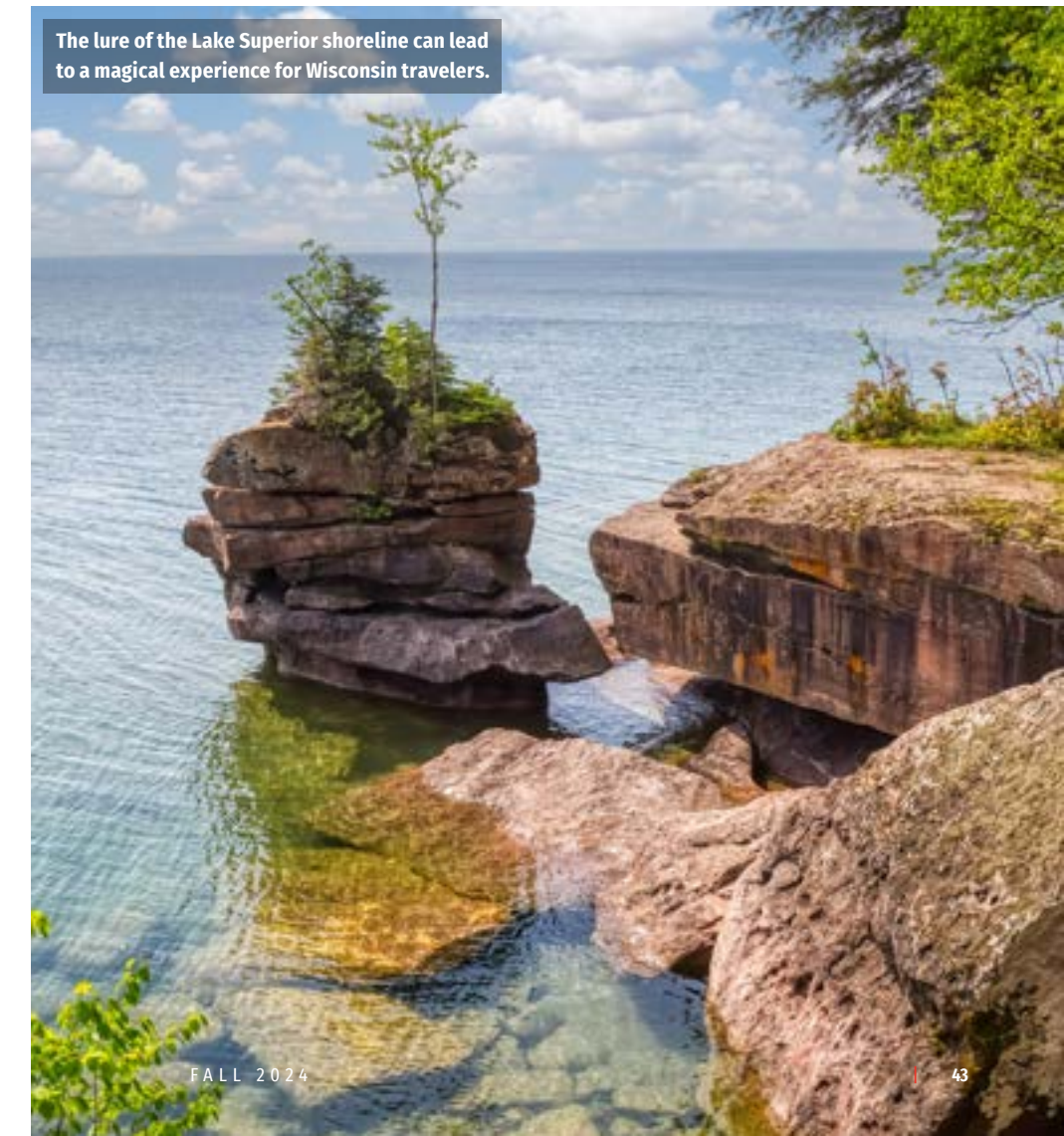
The same could be said of Billings, who knows he will have to make certain sacrifices in his practice while serving as president of the State Bar.

“That was the key question I asked everyone in my life when I was asked if I would accept the nomination to run (for president-elect),” Billings related. “And keeping in mind that I was told I would

have a year as president-elect to kind of ramp up and right-size my practice. So now, we’re improvising a little bit. But luckily, my firm and my partners have been fantastic in supporting my desire to serve the State Bar. Every single one of my colleagues here said, ‘Yes, absolutely, this is great for you, this is great for the bar. Go for it.’”

And of course, Billings’ first conversation was with his wife, who provided her full-fledged support to his accepting the nomination.

“With the support of family, friends and the firm, nearly anything is possible. I am so grateful to everyone for the help they have given me, and I will do the best I can to advance the practice of law in Wisconsin,” Billings said. 



The lure of the Lake Superior shoreline can lead to a magical experience for Wisconsin travelers.

Lawyer's state campaign gets boost from unexpected source

By Tom Kirvan

In a presidential election year, it seems only fitting that Ryan Billings would use a variety of tools during his spring 2024 campaign for the president-elect position with the State Bar of Wisconsin.

Aside from the usual campaign flyers, phone calls, meet-and-greets, and social media messages designed to get the word out about his qualifications for the leadership role with the State Bar, Billings employed one other strategy to help turn the tide in his favor: Primerus.

It proved to be a winning move, as Billings was able to utilize his connections throughout the alliance of Primerus law firms to encourage members of the Wisconsin Bar to consider his candidacy even if they no longer lived in the Midwest state.

"More than a third of our (25,000-plus) members live outside of Wisconsin," Billings reported. "That's a very big number.

"So, what I did, shortly before the election, was I got a list of all Wisconsin licensed

active bar members and where they were located," Billings related. "I then sorted that list by location and identified 12 states that had pretty big numbers of Wisconsin licensed lawyer populations. And then I reached out to the Primerus firms in each of those states and said, 'Do you know any of these people? Are you willing to help me get out the vote?'"

The response, not surprisingly, was overwhelmingly positive, according to Billings, who first became acquainted with Primerus when he attended an event in 2015.

"They supported me in droves," said Billings. "Mike Weinstein of Ferris & Britton, A Professional Corporation in San Diego, for instance, sent a note to every single person on the list. Ed Timmins of Timmins LLC in Denver went through the list, saying 'you should contact this person' and then reached out. Marc Dedman at the Barton LLP firm in Nashville, Tennessee contacted people he knew in his area. Other Primerus members boosted my efforts on social media. These are just some of many examples of Primerus members who pitched in, going above and beyond in assisting my

campaign. I am extremely grateful to each and every person who helped me along the campaign trail.

"I owe quite a bit of the campaign success to Primerus," Billings added. "They rallied behind me. And it was something you might not think about when you are part of the Primerus network, but we can help each other in all sorts of ways."

A business litigator with Kohner, Mann & Kailas, S.C. (KMK) in Milwaukee, Billings said his firm's membership in Primerus has contributed significantly to its growth.


"I litigate all over the place and the way I do that is with Primerus," he explained. "I can market myself as an international law firm because we have lawyers all over the world; I can tell clients with confidence that I can be your quarterback for any litigation anywhere in the world because I know that anywhere I look I can call up a Primerus firm – probably someone I know and that I'm friends with – and they will get excellent representation. I've never been let down by Primerus." 



Photo by Andy Manis for the State Bar of Wisconsin
Long active with the State Bar of Wisconsin, president-elect Ryan Billings (second row, center) is pictured with the organization's current Board of Governors and administrative officers.

A father's life lessons left lasting impressions on son

By Tom Kirvan



R.J. "Bucky" Slomski
Shareholder
Burch & Cracchiolo, P.A.

The nation's fifth largest city, Phoenix features an ever-evolving skyline.

Much of what R.J. "Bucky" Slomski knows about the law and how to conduct himself as an attorney was learned at the side of his father, Ray, with whom he practiced for three years before the uncertainties of life took a decidedly tragic turn.

"My dad was a very intense guy, and I think he knew that he wouldn't be doing me any favors by being easy on me when I joined his law firm," Slomski said of his father, a Northwestern University School of Law alum who, for more than three decades, was one of Arizona's finest medical malpractice attorneys.

"One of his lessons to me was that as a plaintiff litigator, you have to be different than any other kind of animal in the 'jungle,'" said Slomski. "And one way to do that is through your work ethic. Essentially, he said, there will always be a smarter animal out there, but if you outwork them, you will beat them."

It is a lesson that became part of his father's legacy when the 63-year-old Chicago native was killed in a December 2019 car collision with a tractor-trailer as he drove to his vacation home in Sun Valley, Idaho.

For his son, the fatal accident on a Nevada expressway the day after Christmas was a profound loss on both personal and professional levels.

"It, obviously, was totally unexpected and left an enormous void in our family and in the Phoenix community, where he was so active and involved for much of his life," said Slomski, who, in the aftermath of the tragedy, was faced with a series of difficult decisions about the future of the firm and its pending cases.

All while grieving the loss of his mentor, role model, confidant, and pillar of the Phoenix legal community.

Ultimately, the decision was made to dissolve the firm and to refer pending cases to other attorneys, which left Slomski with the prospect of going job-hunting during one of the most challenging times in his life.

Within a few months, he had landed a job with Burch & Cracchiolo, P.A., a Phoenix-based firm with more than 40 attorneys and a reputation as "one of the Southwest's premier law firms" in the areas of business and corporate law, construction law, insurance defense, personal injury, estate planning, family law, labor and employment law, among other specialty areas.

Historically, explained Slomski, Burch & Cracchiolo had concentrated its personal injury work on the defense side, but was willing to start handling additional plaintiff cases as the need arose.

"The timing was right for them, the area I was in was right for them, and my personality was right for them," Slomski said of the culture fit at the firm. "Frankly, it was a godsend at that time – for my career, my personal life, and my stability. It couldn't have worked out better, as the people here are not only now my partners, but some of them are lifelong friends."

Slomski joined the firm just as the COVID-19 pandemic was rearing its ugly head, making the transition to a new job even more unsettling and uncertain.

"It was a very challenging year, that much I can say for certain," said Slomski. "The firm also was moving to a new office at the time and the build-out was still going on when COVID hit."

By the fall of 2020, as the firm operated within a hybrid model of remote and



In a treasured photo, attorney Bucky Slomski smiles alongside his father, Ray, who guided a prominent medical malpractice firm in Phoenix before his death in 2019.



Avid travelers, Bucky Slomski and his wife, Helen Santilli, enjoy visiting special sights, including Horseshoe Bend on the east rim of the Grand Canyon and the Colosseum in Rome.

in-office work, Slomski had found his footing with Burch & Cracchiolo, which has been recognized as one of the “Best Places to Work in Arizona.”

“It’s been a very solid place to land on both feet and to be accepted and valued for what we are trying to accomplish in establishing a Plaintiff’s Personal Injury, Wrongful Death, Catastrophic Injury, and Medical Malpractice practice,” said Slomski.

Slomski originally planned to attend Purdue University to pursue a mechanical engineering degree, but then enrolled at The Ohio State University (OSU) where he had a broader range of academic choices. The Big Ten school also was the alma mater of his mother, Pam, and his older sister, Whitney, who is now an award-winning television commercial producer in Hollywood.

“As a family, we have a lot of Ohio State ties,” said Slomski, whose interest in attending the school was solidified after attending a football game in Ohio Stadium, otherwise known as The Horseshoe.

“There’s nothing quite like it,” Slomski said of being part of more than 100,000 scarlet-clad fans cheering on the Buckeyes. “It’s very special to be in unison with just one goal in mind.”

Upon obtaining his undergrad degree in English from OSU in 2012, Slomski attended Arizona Summit Law School, where he earned his juris doctor in 2015. He has been active with the Arizona Trial Lawyers Association, where he has been named since 2019 as a “Top 40 Under 40 Civil Plaintiff Attorney” honoree. Since 2020, he also has been named a Southwest Super Lawyers “Rising Star,” a designation awarded to only 2.5 percent of young lawyers in Arizona.

His work in medical malpractice cases can be a complex, daunting, and exhausting process, sometimes requiring him to digest scads of medical records and materials from various sources.

“It’s not unheard of to have 10,000 pages of documentation from a single hospital that you have to sift through,” he indicated. “And then that person might have had home health care or physical therapy or their own PCP (Primary Care Physician), or other specialist with records to go through. It takes skill and experience to categorize the important aspects of each case and to understand how the various pieces fit into the puzzle.”

Relatively few cases make it to trial, Slomski noted, making it especially important to “score points” during the deposition process.

“I learned a lot from my dad in that regard,” said Slomski, “as we would

go over all the recorded depositions, preparing video clips that could be used to impeach a witness’s testimony.”

In recent years, Slomski and his colleague, Todd Julian, helped an Arizona family reach a multi-million-dollar settlement in a wrongful death case where a man was hit by a drunken driver and was catapulted some 300 feet from the point of impact, suffering multiple broken bones, a de-gloved arm, and a traumatic brain injury before eventually succumbing to his injuries.

“Obviously, the law doesn’t bring people back to life, but it can help the decedent’s family recover something for the loss of a loved one so that they can better resume their lives,” Slomski said.

In another wrongful death case in 2023, Slomski and Julian helped a family of nine siblings reach a \$4.25 million settlement after their parents were killed in an auto


accident when another vehicle made an illegal U-turn in front of their car.

“Again, the settlement doesn’t make up for the loss the family suffered, but it does offer them a measure of justice,” Slomski declared.

Dealing with such weighty life-and-death matters on a regular basis has given Slomski a special appreciation for the importance of striking a proper work-life balance, especially since his wife, Helen Santilli, has a demanding job as a bankruptcy attorney with Lane & Nach in Phoenix.

The couple, who met in law school, were married in the COVID year of 2020 in their back yard. Among those on hand for the low-key ceremony was the couple’s then newly-acquired dog, a mini-Australian shepherd named Roo.

“Both of our firms have an exceptional focus on work-life balance, recognizing how important a factor it is in a demanding profession like the law,” said Slomski. “It allows us to enjoy travel, which is one of our favorite hobbies. We have had the privilege of working for firms where we could take 16 days off to go to Italy one year and to take two weeks off to go to Amsterdam last year. I had e-mails from my now partners, but bosses at the time, telling me to stop looking at my e-mails while on vacation. That’s really unheard of.

“We got very, very lucky to be in places that understand the need for a good work-life balance and a philosophy that creates a happier employee, breeds loyalty, and makes you a better attorney because you don’t have the pent-up stress that you might otherwise have.” 

Twice as nice

Pulling double duty is a single-minded pursuit for attorney

By Tom Kirvan

Californian Kathryn Baldwin has been active with the Primerus Young Lawyers Section, chairing the committee that produces *Stare Decisis*, the bi-annual newsletter that promotes material written by young lawyers from the Primerus Membership.



Kathryn Baldwin
Partner
Wilke Fleury LLP

Pulling two jobs has become second nature to Sacramento, Calif. attorney Kathryn Baldwin, whose penchant for moonlighting is a passion that she shares with her husband, David, a mechanical engineer.

Their second jobs are decidedly family affairs that center on Kathryn's lifelong love of riding, raising, and showing horses, a competitive sport in which she has won a pair of national titles as well as a trunk load of championship ribbons and trophies.

Each morning, hours before beginning her day job as a partner at Wilke Fleury LLP in California's capital city, Baldwin is tasked with tending to the needs of her four Arabian show horses. The duties include feeding, grooming, watering, and exercising the prize animals, while also handling the mundane tasks of mucking stalls and changing out bedding. In many respects, it's a routine she "rinses and repeats" once she returns home from work after handling her array of legal responsibilities.

"My horses are at home, and it's just the physical investment that never stops," said Baldwin. "We had a joke during COVID that everything was cancelled during the pandemic except cleaning stalls. That never got cancelled. That was an everyday experience."

On the flip side, according to Baldwin, the job of being a horse owner helps her strike a nice balance with the considerable demands of being a recently-minted partner of a highly regarded California law firm.

"All the physical labor involved in having horses helps me take my mind off some of the intellectual pressures involved in my law practice, which can get pretty intense at times, particularly when you're

preparing for a trial,” Baldwin said. “It’s a good give-and-take.”

Her husband, who works for a farm implement dealership in West Sacramento, is no stranger to long hours and multi-tasking.

“We’re definitely in this together,” she said of their horse venture that is housed on a couple of acres in the rural community of Lockeford, located an hour south of Sacramento in the San Joaquin Valley. “He is a huge help with the horses and trailers the horses with me to competitions around the state and far beyond.”

In fact, every other year he drives Baldwin to the U.S. National Arabian Horse Show in Tulsa, Okla., a 1,700-mile, 30-hour trek that can serve as a bonding experience for the young married couple that recently celebrated their fourth anniversary.

In addition to his horse and job responsibilities, David also helps out at his family’s almond farm on a 500-acre site, where hives of bees are imported each year to help pollinate the crop.

“David is a mechanical whiz who can fix almost anything, making sure that their tractors and other farm equipment are in good working order,” said Baldwin of her husband, who has his own special avocation: tractor pulling.

The sport, which became popular in rural areas across the U.S. in the 1950s, serves as his yin to her yang, connecting them on yet another recreational and relationship level.

“Our second date was at a tractor pull,” Baldwin said, noting that she eventually became hooked on the nuances of the world’s heaviest motorsport.

“When he was at Cal Poly, David built a tractor and put a jet engine in it,” Baldwin said with a sense of amazement. “I think it was a T-53 engine that would have been used in a Vietnam-era helicopter. Now, he probably does 10 to 20 pulls a year, traveling up to Eureka in the northern part of the state and as far south as San Luis Obispo.”

A native of Sacramento, Baldwin earned her law degree in 2016 from the University of the Pacific McGeorge School of Law after graduating from California State University, Sacramento, with a bachelor’s degree in philosophy of science and logic.

“I liked to joke that every time I went to a different college, I was going one exit farther up the freeway,” she said of her academic journey.

During law school, Baldwin was a member of the nationally-ranked McGeorge Mock Trial Competition Team. She was a semi-finalist in the regional competition as a second-year student in 2015 and a finalist as a third-year in 2016. She also served as a board member to the McGeorge Women’s Caucus organization during all three years of law school, her final year as president.

Baldwin, who has been active in the Young Lawyers Section of Primerus, is the first lawyer in her family. Her father, Frank, runs a residential and commercial house painting company that Baldwin worked for while earning her undergrad

The California State Capitol in Sacramento is a Neoclassical structure that was completed in 1874 nearly 14 years after construction began.



degree. Her mother, Kathryn Lee, is retired after a career as an executive assistant and financial adviser, and her stepfather, Michael Lee, is an electrician for a school district. Her brother, Franklin, is in banking.

Though she had toyed with the notion of becoming a veterinarian, Baldwin shifted her sights to law school after excelling in writing and philosophy courses. While in law school, Baldwin considered becoming a public defender. She interned for five months with the Sacramento County Public Defender Office and later as a certified law clerk with the Eastern District of California Federal Defender Office, one of two such intern programs in the country.

But after a summer clerking at Wilke Fleury, she accepted an offer to join the firm and has been there ever since, developing a practice that focuses on business, insurance, landlord-tenant, real estate litigation, and medical malpractice matters. With more than two-dozen

attorneys, Wilke Fleury is one of Sacramento’s oldest and largest law firms. Founded in the aftermath of World War I, the firm marked its centennial in 2022.


In her practice, Baldwin has found that “no two hours are alike” as she handles a variety of legal matters that span the spectrum.

“There are some real hard shifts at times when you’re working on a contract for an institutional client and then you turn to some general counsel advice for a landlord-tenant client,” Baldwin related. “And then a little while later, I might be writing a letter to an insurance company to try and make them pay for their insured’s costs from some of the weather-related events we’ve had the past few winters.

“And since I became a partner last year, I have been spending more time overseeing our associates and in the business development realm, working with a local cross-marketing group,” she

added. “It’s been a good way to develop business contacts.”

Baldwin’s legal training also has come in handy with her horse-breeding operation, which can involve assorted contractual and liability issues. The breeding business is headlined by her stallion Psax, who has sired several foals that have gained national acclaim, according to Baldwin.

“He’s always the same horse every time you take him out,” Baldwin said of the prize-winning Psax, who several years ago was the 15th leading sire of half-Arabians in the country. “He’s also had some incredible foals that have gone on to win national championships. It’s really remarkable because a lot of times when you have a stallion that you’re trying to promote, you have him in a big barn and you have to spend all this money on marketing. But in the case of Psax, he lives in my yard. He doesn’t get more local. It doesn’t get more homegrown than him.” 

Kathryne Baldwin and Concertina NNW (“Sophie”) won the Hunter Pleasure Championship for Adult Amateur Owners at the 2021 Pacific Slopes Championships in Rancho Murieta, Calif.



Step by step

'Wellness' is more than just a catchword for S.D. lawyer

By Tom Kirvan

Badlands National Park, which spans some 244,000 acres, is home to one of the world's richest fossil beds.



Jennifer Frank
Attorney
Lynn, Jackson, Shultz & Lebrun, P.C.

For more than two decades, attorney Jennifer Frank has advised a range of clients on “a variety of employment, labor, and benefit issues,” sometimes knotty subjects that can test even the most seasoned lawyer dealing with human resource matters.

Over the course of her career, which included a 10-year stay with a large Minnesota law firm where she was a partner in its employment and executive practice group, Frank also worked for eight years as a senior associate general counsel for a health care system consisting of more than 26,000 employees and 13 hospitals.

It was there, in the giant health care network that also included 90-plus clinics and 16 pharmacies, that Frank became intimately aware of the term “wellness” and its impact on our physical, mental, and social well-being.

Frank – an employment attorney with the South Dakota law firm of Lynn, Jackson, Shultz & Lebrun, P.C. – believes in a three-step approach to good health, time-tested principles that she shares with all willing to listen. Her recommendations are part of an overall wellness plan that also includes daily exercise, proper nutrition, and sound sleep habits.

“First, laugh every day,” Frank said. “It’s a mood-changer and can put you in a happier and more positive frame of mind.”

Laughter, she said, triggers the release of endorphins, the body’s natural “feel-good” chemicals that help you feel more relaxed both physically and emotionally. Researchers also have found that laughter also activates the release of serotonin, which regulates your mood and serves as a natural anti-depressant, according to Frank.

“Second, don’t be afraid to display emotions and your feelings, especially those that can bring you to tears or those that are joyful,” Frank declared. “Bottling up your emotions can add to your stress level and can cause physical and mental problems if not properly addressed.”

Learning healthy ways to reduce stress, Frank said, can boost your resilience while also identifying its root causes.

“Third, learn something new every day, even if it’s something relatively minor,” she added. “It can lead to greater awareness and understanding. It also can promote a thirst for learning and exploring, which can lead to greater personal development.”

Lifelong learning has been part of Frank’s professional toolkit since she joined the workforce as a 15-year-old high



Beach time is a shared joy for Jennifer Frank and her husband Marlin.

school student and has driven her desire to acquire new skills and expand her understanding of the world around her.

A native of New England, Frank grew up in the small town of Danville in southeast New Hampshire, some 45 miles from Boston, where her late father, Peter Suich, worked for the U.S. Department of the Interior. An Army vet with a biology degree from the University of Michigan, Suich had a lifelong love of the outdoors, a passion that he indulged while operating a hobby farm that featured small-scale crop and livestock productions.

“My dad was a super hard worker, and I credit him for instilling in me a strong work ethic,” said Frank, who earned her bachelor’s degree in French and a minor in business administration from the University of Delaware in 1988.

Her early taste of hard work was acquired while toiling on the family farm, feeding and tending chickens, collecting eggs twice daily, and handling various other duties in a vegetable garden.

“Working on the farm taught my brothers and sister and me a lot of responsibility at an early age,” said Frank. “Especially in terms of accountability and dependability; chores had to be done every day, otherwise problems would occur.

“A particularly important part of working on the farm was how it became a bonding experience for my siblings and me, and how we became part of a team in which everyone had to pull their weight.”

The youngest of four children, Frank attributes her love of reading and exploration to her late mother, Carol, who

spent the bulk of her career as a nurse in a nursing home setting.

“She was the rock of the family and brought so much love into our home each day,” said Frank of her mother, a Detroit native who died last December at the age of 86. “She also was a lifelong supporter of women’s causes and really enjoyed visiting art museums and historical sites.”

After obtaining her bachelor’s degree, Frank worked for several companies in a variety of human resources roles in Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C. before attending law school at William Mitchell College of Law (now Mitchell Hamline School of Law) in St. Paul, Minn., where she earned her juris doctor magna cum laude in 1997.

Nearly a decade ago, Frank and her husband, Marlin, made the decision to leave big city life behind, moving to Rapid City, S.D., the so-called “Gateway to Mt. Rushmore,” the massive rock sculpture of four U.S. presidents. The move from the Twin Cities area of Minnesota, where Frank had spent nearly 18 years in the employment law field, to the Black Hills region of South Dakota required Frank to start her legal career all over again.

“I didn’t know anyone out here, so I just began cold-calling law firms in the area to see if they needed someone with my employment law background and skill set,” said Frank, who simultaneously devoted nearly six months of her time fulfilling licensing requirements for the South Dakota state bar.

Her perseverance eventually paid off when she received a call back from an attorney at Lynn Jackson who was about to be appointed to a judgeship position.

“I took over for her when she left, carving out my own path, utilizing all my experience working in the health care field to develop a client base,” she indicated. “Now, I’m representing five different health care entities, providing advice on a full range of employment and benefit issues.”

“It was a hard transition to go from a place where I knew a ton of lawyers and had an established network of contacts, to a much smaller city where I had to start from scratch in building a new network,” Frank admitted. “It took more than three years to develop that network and to market myself in a new legal community.”

Her involvement in the local chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), first as a board member, teaching the SHRM certification class for three years, and then as its president in 2020, helped open a number of doors, as did



A high-altitude family vacation was an uplifting experience for Vanessa and Noah, the children of Jennifer and Marlin Frank.

obtaining her Workplace Investigations Specialty Credential that allows her to conduct neutral investigations into harassment and discrimination claims, as well as other workplace issues.

“It’s unique work, and I’ve really enjoyed the challenge of gathering information from various sources to determine the validity of a complaint or claim,” she said.

Adding to her work responsibilities, Frank and her husband are partners in a rental properties business they formed prior to the couple moving to South Dakota. Frank’s legal background comes in handy with the entrepreneurial venture.

“My husband was a chemical engineer for much of his career but always wanted to have his own business, so he began buying homes, fixing them up, and turning them into rental properties,” she said. “He’s been doing it for about 20 years (full time for the past 9 years), and it has allowed him to combine his engineering,

business, and carpentry skills. He is a real handyman and won the South Dakota state carpentry contest when he was in high school.”

Frank and her husband have two children, Vanessa, a 20-year-old art student in illustration at Rocky Mountain College of Design, and Noah, a 17-year-old junior in high school who is a budding entrepreneur with his own lawn care business and who is beginning to learn the ropes of the family’s property management business.

Their children are well-acquainted with their mother’s belief in the importance of a “life well-lived,” relying on time-honored principles to improve physical and mental health.

“It gives me great satisfaction to practice mindfulness every day, always being willing to learn new things, and to be receptive to new ideas,” said Frank. “It helps me grow and to stay grounded during challenging times.”



The majesty of Glacier National Park in Montana captivated Jennifer Frank and her family during a visit to the outdoor paradise in the northwest part of the state.

South Dakota law firm promotes a different kind of work stoppage

By Tom Kirvan

A word with biblical underpinnings, sabbatical has long had a magical ring to it in academic circles, promising an extended break from the workaday world with the belief that the time off could prove transformative in nature.

While the concept has grown in popularity in the corporate and nonprofit sectors, the legal profession has been slow to embrace its use as a tool to reward longevity and to help avoid employee burnout.

With certain exceptions, of course.

Such as at Lynn, Jackson, Shultz & Lebrun, P.C., a South Dakota law firm founded in 1946 that now has offices in Rapid City, Sioux Falls, and Belle Fourche.

The firm, which marked its 75th anniversary in 2021, revived its sabbatical program several years ago, according to employment attorney Jennifer Frank, who is approaching her 10th year with Lynn Jackson.

“We’ve found it to be a very beneficial and innovative program that was resurrected by the firm in the past couple of years,”

said Frank. “It has been well-received by those who have taken it.”

As it is structured, the program allows one attorney from each office to go on a six-week sabbatical each year based on their date of hire and shareholder status, Frank indicated. The attorney continues to receive his or her full compensation and benefits during the entirety of the sabbatical period, she said.

“The chief requirement is that those who take the sabbatical leave must completely disconnect from work during that time

period,” Frank noted. “Otherwise, it would defeat the purpose of completely distancing yourself from your normal work life. Time away requires being completely free from work of any kind.”

Frank said that some have used the time as a “long-awaited opportunity to travel,” to work on a “house project,” to tend “to family needs,” or as a chance for a soul reset. Whatever the case, each sabbatical-taker has come back in some form refreshed, rejuvenated, restored, or more reflective, she reported.

“It’s totally up to you what you want to do during that time,” Frank said, noting that some have talked of a desire to lose weight, to help a charitable cause, or to indulge a desire for wanderlust.


One of her colleagues in the corporate practice area of the firm came back from his leave with a new-found appreciation for the sabbatical’s purpose.

“He told me that he thought it would be harder to disconnect, but he said he ‘truly disconnected’ and was gone for a good

The scenic splendor of South Dakota has made the state a popular tourist destination.

portion of the summer and came back rejuvenated,” Frank related.

Frank likely will have some first-hand experience to report in the next year or so when she takes her own sabbatical.

“I imagine that I will spend a good portion just relaxing and reading on some beach,” she said of her plans to unwind. “There hasn’t been a whole lot of time for that in recent years.” 

Anti-money laundering act can catch unsuspecting businesses in its web, says pair of Atlanta attorneys

By Tom Kirvan

Three years ago, Congress enacted the Corporate Transparency Act (CTA) with the overall intent of helping law enforcement agencies combat money laundering activities and other financial misconduct through various business entities.

With such lofty purposes in mind – especially in regard to stemming the flow of funds to terrorist organizations, this year, the CTA now comes with a downside, forcing millions of small businesses in the U.S. to begin filing detailed forms containing potentially sensitive financial information that will flow into a database controlled by the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) of the U.S. Department of Treasury.

Which partially explains why four states – Alabama, Maine, Michigan, and Ohio – have challenged the constitutionality of the CTA, arguing in a series of federal court cases that it amounts to an unreasonable search and seizure in violation of the Fourth Amendment while also infringing on an individual's right to privacy.

But as most legal observers will agree, such constitutional challenges can be

long and costly slogs with no certainty of success.

Nor do they place a pause on any approaching filing deadlines, which in the case of the CTA, is December 31, 2024, or in some situations even sooner for certain business enterprises formed this year, according to attorneys Jackie Caroe and John Wisiackas of Krevolin & Horst, LLC in Atlanta.

Caroe and Wisiackas have been busy sounding the filing alarm bells to their clients, reminding them of the importance of compliance to avoid the risk of a \$500 per day fine (capped at a total of \$10,000) and possible criminal penalties of up to two years of imprisonment. The penalties apply to each beneficial owner of a company, Caroe and Wisiackas noted.

Ignorance, they stress, is not bliss when it comes to the nuances of the CTA, which requires most businesses in the U.S. to disclose beneficial ownership information (BOI) to the Treasury Department's FinCEN by year-end. The stated intent of the reporting requirement, they noted, "is to safeguard the U.S. financial system by collecting identifying information that will

make it more difficult to launder ill-gotten gains through shell companies or other opaque ownership structures."

To that end, "reporting companies formed prior to January 1, 2024 are required to file their initial BOI Report with FinCEN by January 1, 2025," Caroe and Wisiackas wrote in a recent letter to "clients and friends" of Krevolin & Horst, a litigation and transactional law firm that proudly bills itself as "champagne lawyering with a beer attitude."

Businesses "formed between January 1, 2024 and December 31, 2024 are required to file their initial BOI Report with FinCEN within 90 days after receipt of evidence of filing from the secretary of state or equivalent officer," they indicated.

And then there are the "updates," said Caroe and Wisiackas.

"Reporting companies are required to file updates to the initial BOI Report with FinCEN within 30 days of any change in the information reported in the initial report or any updated report filed with FinCEN," they indicated. "This would apply, for instance, if your company changed its officers and key employees, changed its address, or issued securities, or if a shareholder or member acquired or disposed of ownership interests or changed his or her residential address."

There are 24 business entities that are exempt from the CTA reporting requirements, according to Caroe and Wisiackas. They include companies with more than 20 full-time employees that produced at least \$5 million in gross sales from the prior year, along with banks, credit unions, insurance companies, tax-exempt entities, accounting firms, public utilities, investment companies registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission, and the like.



Jacquelyn Caroe
Associate
Krevolin & Horst, LLC



John Wisiackas
Former Associate
Krevolin & Horst, LLC

While they laud the legislative goals of the CTA, Caroe and Wisiackas are frank in admitting that it places a significant reporting burden on small businesses required to collect BOI.

“This is a very complicated and confusing regulation, and the bugs are still being worked out,” they said in a presentation to Krevolin & Horst attorneys last winter.

In short, they said that more clarity and precision is needed to reduce the burden on reporting businesses while also increasing compliance and the value of the information reported.

“Something like 33 million LLCs are going to have to file a report,” said Caroe, who specializes in commercial real estate development and finance work. “It’s absolutely a ton. It’s absolutely insane. So, it affects different people differently. John (Wisiackas) is corporate, I’m real estate. Our clients run their entities completely differently, but we both create entities on a regular basis.

“On the real estate side, we have a lot of SPEs, single purpose entities. On any given deal, I’m creating one to five entities because one will hold the membership interest, one will hold the loan, one will hold the property, one will be for the funding,” Caroe indicated. “The numbers start adding up in a hurry.”

Critics of the law, Caroe and Wisiackas also have expressed concern about who can access information contained in the report. Generally speaking, access only is granted to federal government agencies involved in “national security, intelligence, or law enforcement operations,” in addition to state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies; U.S. Department of Treasury personnel; and financial institutions subject to customer due diligence requirements.

“To access BOI, domestic agencies must adhere to strict security and confidentiality measures outlined in the CTA and the Access Rule,” Caroe and Wisiackas said. “These measures include establishing sufficient standards and procedures, entering into agreements with FinCEN, maintaining secure storage systems, record-keeping, access restrictions, audits, and reporting requirements.”

Otherwise, violators may face “civil penalties of \$500 per day until remedied, and criminal penalties of up to \$250,000 in fines, imprisonment for up to 5 years, or both,” they wrote.

Both Caroe and Wisiackas urge business owners to seek professional guidance in filing the forms or to avail themselves of readily-available software programs. Especially important, they said, is to be vigilant about meeting the reporting deadlines.

“We’re not going to see the issues until everybody files, and then there’s a 30-day turnaround for any change in the entity or the BOI,” said Caroe. “That’s when the deadlines and the reporting requirements are going to become very rough.”

Caroe, who joined Krevolin & Horst in the spring of 2023, graduated with high honors from the University of California, Davis, where she double-majored in political science and psychology. She earned her juris doctor from the University of Florida Levin College of Law, graduating magna cum laude while receiving the Pro Bono Excellence Award and the Outstanding Clinic Student Award.

“I’m an Army brat,” Caroe said, noting that her father, Major Dale Caroe, was General Norman Schwarzkopf’s “righthand man” during the Desert Storm operation. “There are no lawyers in my family, but I knew I wanted to be a lawyer when I was five.

It’s actually on one of my kindergarten homework assignments, which is literally no surprise to anybody.”

Before setting her sights on law school, where she received a full-ride scholarship, Caroe made a conscious decision to “experience life outside of the military bubble,” including a year-and-a-half stint as a congressional legislative aide.

“I then did many different things,” Caroe related. “I was a bikini model. I was a pageant queen. I was a cocktail waitress at the number one club in the country for six years. I was a nutritionist. I ran nutrition-focused businesses for six years. So, I did all of that and then decided it was time to be an adult and I went to law school.”

That decision undoubtedly met with the approval of her mother, Andrea, who had her own distinguished career, serving as chair of the National Organic Standards Board before creating the humane treatment label for Whole Foods, according to Caroe.

Wisiackas, who joined Krevolin & Horst in 2019 and recently departed the firm, grew up in Fairfax, Va., taking his academic talents to the University of Virginia, one of the top public universities in the country where he received his bachelor’s degree in economics. He then attended Emory University School of Law in Atlanta, graduating with honors en route to landing a job with a boutique firm specializing in health care law.

There he represented a number of toxicology labs while handling both transactional work and litigation matters. His current practice areas are corporate law, commercial real estate, health care, and mergers and acquisitions.

As the son of a corporate lawyer, Wisiackas had a built-in role model in his father, John, one of the principals in the Fairfax

firm of Odin Feldman Pittleman. Despite the father-son age difference and the fact that they practice law in different states, the two attorneys with the same first and last names proved difficult for some to distinguish, the younger Wisiackas discovered not long after joining Krevolin & Horst.

“I was 25 when I became a lawyer and I was 27 or so when I came here,” Wisiackas said of his career trajectory.


So, it came as a surprise when Wisiackas was notified after little more than two

years of practice that he had been recognized by Super Lawyers magazine in its Georgia publication, which limits its list of honorees to just 2.5 percent of the attorneys in each state.

“I was new at the firm and one of our partners was impressed, but wondered how I did that at age 27,” Wisiackas related. “I was kind of confused myself even while I was accepting all these congratulations.”

Wisiackas then decided to do a little investigative work of his own, eventually determining that the magazine had

created a case of mistaken identity, crediting the son for the father’s long and illustrious career in the law.

“The award was not a mistake, just a little bit of a mix-up,” Wisiackas said with a laugh. “And you know, the good-natured firm that Krevolin & Horst is, I’ve got an award on my desk that says, ‘John Wisiackas, Son of a Super Lawyer.’ It was nice of them to formally commemorate my success.” 



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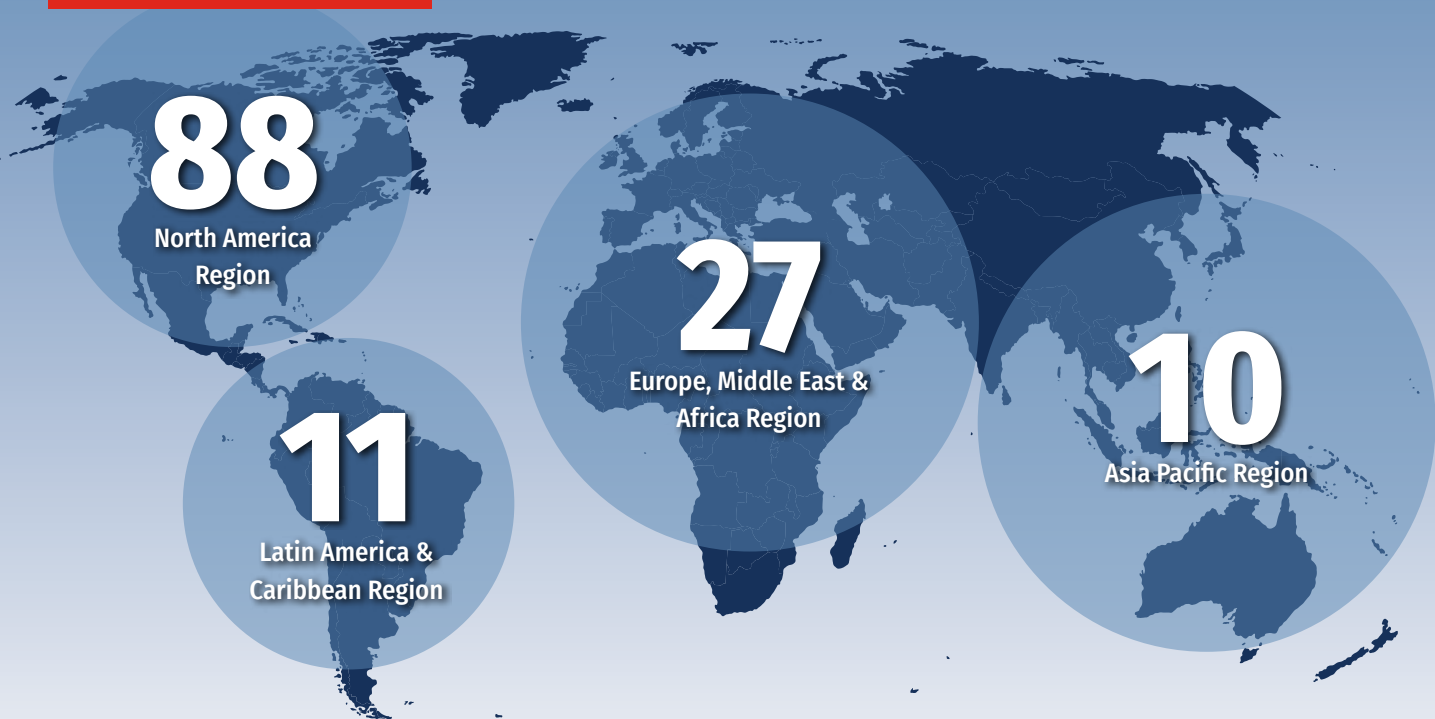
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