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Jack Armstrong Celebrates 50 Years of Practice

by Anne Parys

If you have been fortunate enough to meet Jack Armstrong, you are immediately taken with his vitality and enthusiasm. Jack divides his time between Pittsburgh, Delray Beach, Florida, and Chautauqua, New York so I don't get to see him very often, but I always look forward to sitting down with him and hearing some stories – he's a natural storyteller and he has plenty of tales to tell.

My pretext for cornering Jack this time was his 50th law school reunion. Jack was graduated in 1956 from the University of Michigan Law School, where he was a member of the Order of the Coif and Phi Alpha Delta. He was also an assistant editor of the Michigan Law Review. Jack graduated with a class of 224 other newly minted attorneys. Sadly, after 50 years, some of those classmates have passed on, but approximately 150 of the class of 1956 are invited this year to a reunion in Ann Arbor, Michigan to reconnect and reminisce.

When I asked Jack how a boy from Bellevue ended up attending school in Michigan, he chuckled. When he applied to the University of Michigan for his undergraduate degree, it had a policy that the first and second in the class of any high school would be automatically admitted – Jack wouldn't need to take an entrance exam! His father had already taken him to Michigan and he knew he loved the area, so he began his studies and joined ROTC. He earned his A.B. with distinction in 1951, the same year that he married his first wife, Ellen Gliem.

With his new bride by his side, Jack decided to apply to law school, choosing the University of Michigan, since he was living in Ann Arbor at that time and because the North Koreans crossed the 38th parallel. Jack knew that as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army, it was just a matter of time before he would be called to serve his country. The University of Michigan offered him the opportunity to begin his legal studies immediately and Jack was able to get a semester of law school under his belt before the Army sent him to Stuttgart, Germany. As was customary, the Army gave Jack 30 days leave before he was to be shipped overseas, but Jack shrewdly asked to be shipped to Germany before commencing his leave. In that way, Jack was able to travel through Europe and thus began a lifelong love for travel. During his service, he was able to see much of Europe and when he finished his tour of duty, he returned to Michigan where he earned a J.D. with distinction in February 1956.

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Jack has fond memories of those years. He and Ellen socialized with other married classmates and they started their own family: a son, Tom, and a daughter, Elizabeth (Betsy), both of whom were born in Ann Arbor. He had a number of favorite professors, but was especially influenced by L. Hart Wright, who instructed him in tax. Little did Jack know he would one day concentrate his practice in tax and estates.

After finishing law school, Jack accepted a position with Smith Buchanan Ingersoll Rodewald and Eckert and moved his family back to Pittsburgh. Under the guidance of Frank Ingersoll, Jack tried his hand at a variety of areas of law, even spending a year doing labor work. He also found a friend and colleague in Casey Neuman, with whom he closely worked. Don McCaskey was another mentor to Jack and when Mr. McCaskey reached the age of 65, in accordance with firm rules, he relinquished his administrative duties as the head of the estates and tax sections. Jack was asked to take over. Over the next 30 years, he became an active and distinguished attorney in the area of estates, trusts and taxation. He was made a fellow of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel, serving as the PA State Chair from 1990-1995 and served as the Chairman of the Real Property Probate and Trust Law Section of the Pennsylvania Bar Association from 1988-1989. Jack, now with many years of experience under his belt, assumed the role of mentor for attorneys such as Jim Ummer and Doug DeNardo, both of whom would eventually reunite with him at Rothman Gordon.

1990 was a difficult year for Jack. He suffered a mild stroke and lost his wife, Ellen. He decided to scale back some of his responsibilities and became Of Counsel at Buchanan Ingersoll. Jack also had to face that the practice of law was rapidly changing. Many firms viewed the practice

of law more as a business than a profession and Jack found that his values and the aspects of law that had enticed him initially were no longer the status quo. His good friend, Casey Neuman, with whom he had worked closely for over 30 years had moved his practice to Rothman Gordon and suggested that a similar change would be more in line with Jack's expectations and rekindle his enthusiasm for the practice of law. In 1996, Jack joined Rothman Gordon as Of Counsel to the Estates, Trusts & Taxation Department. He still believes that an attorney's primary duty is to serve the public and in addition to serving his clients, he is a member of the Pennsylvania, Florida, Palm Beach County and Allegheny County bar associations and an arbitrator for NASD.

Jack was also lucky enough to find love a second time and, in 1993, married Elizabeth (Liz) White, who has two sons and a daughter, eight grandchildren and five great grandchildren. Added to Jack's own five granddaughters and one great grandson, Liz and Jack have plenty of family to visit. They both enjoy playing golf and traveling and in 1999-2000, they flew around the world on the Concorde Millennium Trip. There were many amazing sites and adventures, but Jack recalls a hot air balloon ride over the Serengeti as a highlight of the trip. Jack is involved with numerous community and social groups, including the First Presbyterian Church of Delray Beach, FL and several Masonic organizations. He is also a member of the Duquesne Club; the Town Club in Jamestown, NY; Delray Beach Club and The Little Club in Delray Beach; the St. Clair Country Club in Pittsburgh and the Chautauqua Golf Club in Chautauqua, NY. The joy that Jack derives from life is apparent and infectious. Rothman Gordon is proud to have him as an integral part of the firm and congratulate him on 50 years of distinguished service to the public and dedication to the legal profession.



Jack and his wife, Liz, in front of the Taj Mahal in India during their Concorde Millennium Trip around the world.



Jack relaxes in Delray Beach, where he resides when not in Pittsburgh.

RG Supports the Troops...



Over the summer, receptionist Sissy Bath and paralegal Jaymie McElroy put together a drive to collect items for the troops in Iraq. The soldiers were so appreciative, they sent us a flag and plaque. The flag that Sissy and Jaymie are holding was flown in F-15E Strike Eagle 89-0486, Call sign "Rumble 65" through the skies of Iraq on 16 July 2006 during a combat mission in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

...And the Arts!



Attorney Bernie Puzzuole and Terry Scotti of Yanni Partners met Nora Ephron at the Pittsburgh Speakers Series, of which Rothman Gordon is a sponsor.

Year End Checklist Now Available

You may be thinking about turkey and pie but we're thinking about taxes! Now is the time to review and plan for tax time. For example, did you know that the Energy Tax Incentives Act created a new \$500 personal federal income tax credit, which applies to energy-saving items put to use in 2006 or 2007? This is also a good time for businesses to ensure their minute books are up to date and to reevaluate their corporate structuring. Use our handy Year End Checklist to evaluate your situation from an income tax, estate planning, and business planning perspective. The Checklist can be downloaded from our web site: www.rothmangordon.com.

In the news...

Nine Named *Best Lawyers In America* for 2007

Nine Rothman Gordon attorneys have been selected by their peers to be included in the 2007 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America*. They include: Samuel L. Douglass and Thomas R. Solomich for Real Estate; Shelley W. Elovitz for Workers' Compensation Law; K. Sidney (Casey) Neuman, James W. Ummer and R. Douglas (Doug) DeNardo for Trusts and Estates; and Stephen H. Jordan, James W. Carroll, Jr. and Louis B. Kushner for Labor & Employment Law. Louis was also listed for Alternate Dispute Resolution, giving him the rare distinction of being listed twice.

Inclusion in *Best Lawyers* is based on an exhaustive peer-review survey that has been developed and refined for nearly 25 years. The current edition of *Best Lawyers* is based on 1.8 million confidential evaluations by the top attorneys in the country. There is no fee or purchase requirement to be listed.

Two Associates Named Pennsylvania Super Lawyer Rising Stars for 2006

Chad Tomosovich, an associate in the Corporate Department and John Zatkos, an associate in the Workers' Compensation/Social Security Disability Department, were named Pennsylvania Super Lawyer Rising Stars for 2006. This is the second listing for both attorneys.

Rising Stars are selected based upon peer nominations and independent research. Only 2.5% of Pennsylvania attorneys are chosen. There is no fee to be listed as a Rising Star.

Former Rothman Gordon Law Clerk Becomes State Representative

Jaret Gibbons spent the summer of 2005 as a law clerk for the firm. This summer, he mounted a campaign for State Representative of the 10th District, which covers Franklin, Marion, New Sewickley, North Sewickley and Economy in Beaver County and 12 towns in Lawrence County and two communities in Butler County.

Jaret defeated Democratic incumbent Frank LaGrotta in last May's primary and then defeated Republican Chuck Morse in November's election. At 26, Jaret is the youngest of the freshman class heading to Harrisburg.

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