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I was admitted to practice in Michigan in 1976. I was sworn in before the Honorable Jack Warren and practiced my entire career in Ingham County (with some practice in the surrounding counties.) In the early years, I practiced general litigation, serious criminal trial work including several dozen homicides, and domestic relations law. For the last 35 years, I restricted my practice to Domestic Relations work. Since 1987, I have been a partner in the Sinas Dramis Law Firm in Lansing, MI and am presently retired and serve as Of Counsel to the Firm.

Presently, my wife Jane and I live about 2/3rd of the year in our home in Meridian Township and the balance of the year in our home in Bonita Springs, Florida. I am not quite sure about retirement as that phase of our lives has just begun. One thing that is sure, however, is that every day is a gift. I have found that working on my genealogy is a great project. Wish I had done it sooner.

The most beneficial part of practicing law has been the attorney/client relationships with so many clients; making friendships with so many great lawyers and people, our support staff, and my great partners. It was really a great place to spend a career.

Allow me to offer a few suggestions for the newer (or aspiring) lawyers:

Treat every person with dignity and respect. That includes opposing counsel, the court, and members of the court staff. That includes everyone -the staff in your office, and other offices. People involved in your practice and everyday life.

Consider employment with the government - It is a great training ground and learning experience, and for many, will become a career. It also allows you to learn from the mistakes of others and saves you from not making the same mistakes at your client's expense. Some of the best lawyers I know in private practice have come from the Prosecutor's office, former Judicial Clerkships, and jobs in the government sector.

If you are in any type of litigation practice, always get to court at least one-half hour before your case is scheduled to be heard. This will give you the opportunity to see how the Judges work and rule, and, you will probably see a lot of good lawyering (and maybe some not so good lawyering that you might choose to avoid). Judges tend to be idiosyncratic (like us all). It will give you some idea of what works for that Judge, and what doesn't work,

Get a mentor, if you can; This is critical. Become friends with a lawyer in your office or a classmate a few years ahead of you, who you can bounce things off and give you input on challenging issues of the practice of law and interactions with other lawyers. All lawyers have been in your situation before and are amenable to helping you with suggestions. (You may have to tolerate some war stories along the way, but it is worth it.)

Get a good (and pleasant) legal assistant or paralegal. I can not say how many

times my legal assistant has helped me over the years. Stacy Harkness has been my legal assistant for more than 35 years. She has help avoid some serious faux pas. So many times, so, that I took to calling her "Radar O'Reilly" because she always sees the "incoming". Your secretary or legal assistant becomes your representative to the entire legal system and your clients, and might know more about the law and how the system works than you do.

The delivery of bad news to the client - All the news that you deliver to the client will not be "we won!!" Sometimes the news will not be so good and there is a tendency to delay awhile before you tell the client the bad news. Don't. Never wait. It won't get any easier over time, and the last thing you want to have happen is the client calling you and telling you that he or she hear the news from someone else, or worse yet, the other side. It is a good idea to have some notion about where the case will go from there as the client will invariably want to know.

Do a good job every time out. Remember people are watching in the courtroom. Other lawyers, Judges, clients and potential clients. The courtroom is a good place to show potential clients or the lawyers who may be waiting to have their case heard to be impressed with that new lawyer that they had never heard of before. Just be professional.

Hit the ball hard every day. The practice of law is difficult and arduous. It doesn't happen 9 to 5, Monday thru Friday. You need to work at it many more hours a week. Evenings and weekend are necessary in order to do the job well.

Finally, always remember that it is not being a lawyer that makes you special. It is what you do being a lawyer that can make you special.