

Business attorney makes public service part of his practice

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Josh Kindkeppel

The aptitude test, considered an outdated relic by some, accurately predicted attorney Josh Kindkeppel's future.

"Two things came up: public servant or attorney," Kindkeppel said of his pre-graduate school test results.

The test nailed it. Now a shareholder with Eustice, Laffey, Sebranek & Auby SC in Sun Prairie, Kindkeppel regularly uses his position as an attorney to help others.

"I don't want to just work with the influential," he said. "I want to help people who are down on their luck.

"At the end of the day, your fees have to be paid; that's an economic reality, But

if I can help people from all economic backgrounds, I feel it's a fuller practice."

For Kindkeppel, a business attorney who focuses on employment cases and real estate, that's meant representing everyone from a jailed tradesman fighting for unemployment compensation to a foreign pharmaceutical student accused of cheating on the eve of graduation.

Sometimes it's meant collecting a mere \$70 in fees for 12 hours of work. At least once, as in the case of the academic appeal (where attorneys aren't allowed to speak), it meant preparing a graduate student to argue her own case in less than three weeks.

"The real downside is you invest a lot of emotional energy on cases," Kindkeppel said.

But, he insisted, it's worth it.

"I like to fight the good fight and stand up for people," Kindkeppel said. "You really are empowering people who wouldn't be able to make their claim. You get to be that mouthpiece for people."

It's a spirit Kindkeppel tries to bring to his work as president of the Dane County Bar Association, where he has helped develop a mentoring program for attorneys with fewer than five years in practice.

Since it started in 2007 with 10 newer attorneys and 10 mentors, the year-long program has grown to 35 mentees and mentors.

"The most surprising thing we've found in the mentorship program is how much the mentors enjoy it," Kindkeppel said. "We thought the mentees would get so much out of it, but we didn't think about how much the mentors would love the program. All they want is to help you accomplish your goals and support you."

Wisconsin Law Journal: What was your least favorite course in law school? **Josh Kindkeppel:** Torts was my least favorite course. It was the first class in which a professor called on me to answer a question. My mind froze. I could only hear white noise and I felt like a deer in headlights. It was a tough way to get introduced to the Socratic Method.

WLJ: If you hadn't become a lawyer, what would you have done? **Kindkeppel:** I would have gone to graduate school for a Ph.D. in psychology or religion.

WLJ: What profession would you not like to explore? **Kindkeppel:** I am not interested in exploring underwater welding.

WLJ: What is the best part of being an attorney? **Kindkeppel:** To help your clients accomplish their goals

WLJ: If you could develop one CLE course for credit, what would it be about? **Kindkeppel:** Academic graduate appeals

WLJ: Who are your favorite writers? □ **Kindkeppel:** Dean Bakopoulos, Mel Ellis, John Nichols, Jim Hightower

WLJ: What is your greatest extravagance? □ **Kindkeppel:** 2013 Subaru Outback

WLJ: What are you craving right now? □ **Kindkeppel:** A homemade peanut butter cookie

WLJ: Finish this sentence: Happiness is ... □ **Kindkeppel:** talking with an old friend.