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STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN HARNACK

Mike Anderson and Kate Johnson, both registered in-house attorneys in Madison at the CUNA Mutual Group, received conflicting answers as to whether in-house registered attorneys can perform pro bono work.

COMMON INTERESTS

RULE CHANGE FOR REGISTERED IN-HOUSE ATTORNEYS FOLLOWS NATIONAL SHIFT

By Erika Strebel

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Although the CUNA Mutual Group has been offering pro bono legal services since 2013, it has never been clear whether Wisconsin Supreme Court rules let every lawyer there participate.

Particularly ambiguous are the rules concerning in-house attorneys who are employed by the Madison-based insurance company and have in-state clients but are nonetheless not licensed in Wisconsin. These so-called registered in-house attorneys can now only do pro bono work for “qualified clients of a le-

“We’ve seen a tremendous increase in the interest to be engaged in pro bono. There’s a desire to formalize and promote those efforts, and create greater opportunities.”

Eve Runyon,
Corporate Pro Bono director

gal service program” — a phrase whose exact meaning has never been spelled out.

A recent proposal is meant to change that.

Looking for clarity

“We weren’t sure how to interpret the rule, and we didn’t want to violate it,” said Kate Johnson, lead counsel at CUNA Mutual. “So some of our registered in-house counsel staff sat out on pro bono activities they would have otherwise liked to participate in.”

Wisconsin now has roughly 350 lawyers registered as in-house counsel, according to the Board of Bar Examiners, the agency charged with overseeing both admissions to the State Bar and continuing legal education. With so many attorneys falling into that

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ALL IN THE FAMILY

RELATIVES PUT FLESH AND BLOOD(LINES) INTO LAW PRACTICES

By Jessica Stephen

Special to the Wisconsin Law Journal

It was no surprise that Kristen and Emily Lonergan became lawyers.

After all, they practically grew up in a law firm.

“When they were babies we put them in one of those portable cribs and let them sleep,” said Kevin Lonergan, president of Herrling Clark Law Firm in Appleton, who began practicing in 1979. “As they were older — back then, we didn’t have computers; we had typewriters — they’d be walking around the office using secretaries’ typewriters and making copies of their hands.”

“Collecting paper clips off the floor,” interjected Emily Lonergan, an attorney since 2011 with Gimbel Reilly Guerin & Brown in Milwaukee. “But we were only allowed to take the ones on the floor.”

“You watched trials, too,” Kevin said.

“We definitely did,” Emily said. “I still remember the one where that client gave you a Ten Commandments tie. I even still remember most of your closing argument on that one. You said it was like each thing that was happening to her after the accident was like a rock tied to her feet, and she was sinking to the bottom of this lake.”

From Saturdays spent playing to part-time summer jobs at the office, even hours struggling to sit still in court, all four of the Lonergan kids learned first-hand what comes as part and parcel of the life of a plaintiff’s personal-injury lawyer. It turned out to be good preparation for the life they all live now.

But it was their father’s love for his work that really pushed Emily and Kristen toward the profession.

“He’ll always joke that he told us to be

Family, continued on page 14



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FAMILY

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doctors — and he did — but he also said if he won the lottery on Sunday, he'd be back at work on Monday," Emily said. "The amount he loved his job was obvious, and there's no way that can't rub off."

It's a thread woven throughout generations of families with ties to the legal profession.

Law all the time

For Rachel Bradley, the legal branch of the family tree goes back to her great-grandfather, James Quinn, the first chairman of the Chicago Transit Authority.

"Rachel grew up in a family that was just law all the time," said Christine Bremer Muggli, Bradley's mother, who began practicing in 1978.

Bremer-Muggli had a similar experience.

She watched as members of her family from two separate generations — Quinn, her grandfather, and Robert Bremer, her father — used their law degrees in service to the city of Chicago.

Both were alderman. Quinn not only had a job with the Chicago Transit Authority, but also did real estate and tax work in Chicago. Other responsibilities included using the city's patronage system to ensure the needy could find food and jobs during the Depression.

"I always knew I was going to be a lawyer," Bremer Muggli said. "It was just something that was natural; helping people was something I was going to do."

And she wasn't alone.

Her sister, Helen, is a retired law librarian. Her other sister, Grace, manages a law firm. Aside from Rachel the lawyer, Bremer Muggli has another daughter, Hannah, who became a paralegal.

Bremer-Muggli, for her part, says she found her calling in representing injured plaintiffs.

She met Rachel's father, Alan Grischke, also a lawyer, while working at the Wisconsin Attorney General's Office. They're now divorced. But, for a time, they practiced together.

"I have very early memories of being on the floor of my mom's office playing with highlighters and going to the copy machine with my sister and causing all kinds of trouble," recalled Rachel Bradley, who joined the unofficial family business in 2014.

She even married into a family of attorneys.

Her husband, John Bradley, is a founding shareholder at Strang Bradley in Madison. Her sister-in-law practices in Arizona. Her brother-in-law is a paralegal. Her father-in-law, Mark Bradley, is a partner at Ruder Ware in Wausau. And her mother-in-law is Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Ann Walsh Bradley.

It's not exactly the life Bremer-Muggli envisioned when she tried to shield Rachel from shoptalk at the dinner table.

"You can ruin kids as a litigator," she sighed.

But it's also not a life she discouraged Bradley from pursuing, although there was a small attempt at pushing her daughter to study philosophy.

"I had an inkling she could go into law, so I encouraged her to study English so she could write, and philosophy so she could think," Bremer Muggli said. "I didn't realize she'd do so well in philosophy. And when she did, I encouraged her to get her PhD. But she couldn't be talked out of the law."

"It always seemed to be an incredibly interesting business," said Bradley, who also practices at Strang Bradley. "I grew up in a law office, where there were modules of the anatomy of a burn or a skeleton or diagrams of a tractor. It always seemed to be something fun or different. At the same time, I could see this progression of people my parents could help. It was cool to watch."

The Padway way

The opportunity to help is also what led M. Nicol "Nick" Padway to the law.

"Just seeing the appreciation the clients



The Lonergans — Kristen (left) and Emily (right) — grew up hanging around their father Kevin's (middle) law firm.

"It always seemed to be an incredibly interesting business. I grew up in a law office, where there were modules of the anatomy of a burn or a skeleton or diagrams of a tractor. It always seemed to be something fun or different. At the same time, I could see this progression of people my parents could help. It was cool to watch."

Rachel Bradley,

attorney at Strang Bradley

had for the things my dad did for them and how he went out of his way to help them — it wasn't always the monetary compensation. It was the other forms of gratification you get when you really make a difference in somebody's life," said Padway, whose father, Milton, started the family firm Nick Padway, who he now runs with his nephew, Aaron Dekoskey.

Uncle Joe Padway, an immigrant from England, was the first in the Padway family to take the bar exam. He set an example of what a life of service could be shortly after he began practicing in 1910. He first worked as a Milwaukee County Circuit Court judge and, subsequently, as general counsel for the AFL-CIO. That latter position eventually led him to the U.S. Supreme Court, before which he argued the constitutionality of the National Labor Relations Act.

By 1945, Joe Padway had decided to settle in Washington, D.C. The move left members of the second generation of Padway lawyers to practice alone. Among them was his nephew, Milton, a World War II veteran who was initially recruited to be a spy but eventually became a U.S. Army attorney.

"He set up his own shop here in Milwaukee, and that would be the start of our firm," said Nick Padway, who joined that firm in 1975.

The firm has since proved successful enough to bring in even more members of the Padway family. Nick's younger brother, William, joined Padway and Padway in 1982.

"We had a great experience," Nick said. "I know there are some family firms who have their disputes and go their separate ways, but my father and brother and I had a wonderful experience practicing together. We tried some big cases together, worked on a lot of different things together and we had a lot of fun. It can be hard to think of the practice of

law as being fun but, despite the difficulties and the ups and downs, we found a way to make it a fun environment."

Milton and William have both since died — Milton in 1996 and William nearly 10 years later. So neither was alive to see Nick appear before the Wisconsin Supreme Court to argue the constitutionality of 2011's Act 10, the state law stripping most public employees of the bulk of their collective-bargaining rights.

The experience nonetheless reminded Padway of his family ties, largely because it brought to mind his uncle's Supreme Court days. The family's connection to the law now extends to members of a fourth generation. They number not only Nick's nephew Dekoskey, who became an attorney in 2010, but also his daughter, Sarah Padway, who got her law degree in May 2015 and is working in Japan with the U.S. Navy's Judge Advocate General Corp. There is also Will's oldest son, Justin Padway, who also got his law degree in May 2015, and now practices in New York; Will's other son, Jared, who just finished his first year at the University of Wisconsin Law School; and Padway's son, Ethan Padway, who is headed to law school next year.

Support system

However far back a connection to the law might go, there's something special about practicing law with family. That's particularly true for siblings, said Kristen Lonergan.

"I've learned that my sister and I were on the same side," said Kristen, an associate attorney Crooks, Low & Connell in Wausau, who started practicing in 2010.

"She would probably also admit that we butted heads a lot growing up. With our stubbornness and how good we are at arguing, we fought a lot, as siblings do. And we were very competitive with each other because we were involved in the same things. I was in mock trial, she was in mock trial. I went to law school, and she was in a fast-track program. So she was just a year behind me, instead of two.

"But when we started practicing, we had this breakthrough in our relationship. And, instead of being competitive and arguing, we became really close. There was nothing to fight about. It was just, 'How can we support each other and be the best that we can be?' "That was the coolest thing that has come out of all of us practicing the same type of law. That was really the bridge that brought us closer together. Now, she's one of my favorite people in the world."

Her work has also given Lonergan a means of getting support no matter the day or hour. Among those who regularly offer a helping

hand are her father, her sister and her sister-in-law, Sarah Knutson, who has been a lawyer since 2011. Not only can she trust them to provide advice on particular cases but also to have a deep understanding of the profession's ups and downs.

Her father agreed.

"They knew I put in long hours and, if I had a jury trial coming up, I couldn't be there for their concert or their game that week," Kevin Lonergan said. "But they would also know if I had a case settle at the last minute and I had some time on the calendar, I'd try to make up that time and take a day off."

Professional awards can take on even greater significance when they are presented before family members who truly understand the demands of legal practice. Kevin Lonergan found that out when he was recognized last year as the Wisconsin Association for Justice's Trial Lawyer of the Year.

"To my surprise, they asked Kristen and Emily to do the introduction," Kevin said. "I'll probably start crying just talking about it, but they had me in tears when they did that. I don't know that I've ever had a more memorable night in my life."

Still, sharing a profession with relatives isn't always easy.

Padway said the members of his family have worked hard to support each other's interests outside the firm. Nick, for instance, was chairman of the Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission, and Will was a municipal judge in Fox Point. They also coached their children's sports teams — Will taking up basketball, and Nick ice hockey.

"We did things outside of the practice to make sure we had balance in our lives," Padway said.

For those lawyers who have been able to benefit by watching a relative succeed in the legal profession, the experience has been priceless, Bradley said.

"It's just incredible," she said. "I feel like one of those daughters of an artisan. To be able to grow up and watch it happen and then in my professional life shadow my mother and my father — it just feels wonderful to be able to continue that."

That's true even if it means a little extra worry for her mother.

"For me, it's both incredible pride but also some trepidation," Bremer-Muggli said. "I know how hard this practice is and how it can take a toll on folks. So I'm just so proud of Rachel; she had the courage to open her own law firm one year out of law school. But, as her mother, I'm worried. I want her to be happy, and I don't want her to work too hard — and I know she will."