Chicago Daily Law Bulletin

Have You Done Your Mitzvah This Law Day?

represented.

than 25 years. Each of these individuals reached the

pinnacle of the legal

profession because of his

dedication to preparation,

exemplary work ethic, and

the fact that they cared

those

There is another important

trait that each of the great

mentors mentioned above

share. Each of the "Hall of

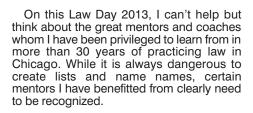
Famers" never forgot from whence they came and recognized the absolute

By Michael K. Demetrio Corboy & Demetrio

Law Day is the Super Bowl Sunday of our profession. Today is the day to honor and remember the greats among us. In other words, today we should recognize and remember our legal "Hall of Fame."

While the NFL had its Lombardis, Halases, and Ditkas, they in fact pale in comparison to the great coaches and mentors who have both practiced here and

more importantly, taught the generations that followed them.



Judicially, I have learned valuable lessons and how to comport myself before an appellate tribunal from Judge William Bauer of the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals. Additionally, through direct contact and observation, I have received judicial mentoring from esteemed members of the court such as: Joel Flaum, 7th Circuit Court of Appeals; Charles Kocoras, United States District Court of the Northern District of Illinois; Harry Comerford, Chief Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County; and William Maddux, Presiding Judge of the Law Division of the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Each of these judicial greats has imparted lessons to many as to, not only the nuts and bolts of proper legal procedures, but more importantly, the proper way to conduct yourself as the lawyer addressing the court and the lawyer dealing with clients and counsel representing the opposing side.

In addition to judicial guidance, I, and many others, have been the beneficiaries of great tutelage from members of the bar. I have been lucky enough to work on cases with and in turn learn by osmosis from legal giants such as Philip Corboy, Leonard Ring, Robert Clifford, and of course, my own personal legal hero, my brother Tom, whom I have been privileged to work with for more



Michael K. Demetrio

privilege they enjoyed in being able to practice law. Because they were so privileged, these venerable members of the bench and bar never forgot to give back.

That common trait emanates from one very important source: a man whom I have always thought of as the "Mentors' Mentor" — the Honorable Abraham Lincoln Marovitz. To all of us were lucky enough to know Abraham Lincoln Marovitz, he was always called simply, "Judge Abe."

The story of Abe's life has been the subject of numerous articles, books, and stories told over decades. I will leave to your own research those articles and stories. You need only know that Judge Abe was the type of man who conversed with and advised individuals ranging from United States presidents, mayors of the City of Chicago, and Frank Sinatra in Booth One of the Pump Room, to someone who was down and out on a Chicago street corner.

When it came to the Chicago legal community, Abe Marovitz always made himself available to any lawyer, fellow judge, or law student who needed guidance within our profession. Each of the legal giants I referred to above, and many others, considered Abe Marovitz as their number one advisor.

As a very young attorney, I, too, was fortunate enough to come under the wing of Judge Marovitz. Whether it was sitting in Judge Abe's chambers in the Dirksen Federal Building, which was a museum both to his namesake as well as the Chicago social and legal scene, or having lunch at I yalked away not being enriched by Judge Abe's words. While his lessons as to how to research, deal with difficult opponents, or

argue in front of a jury were invaluable, on this Law Day, one lesson stands above all else that Judge Abe taught me and countless others. I pass that lesson on to you today in honor of Law Day.

Abraham Lincoln Marovitz made sure I understood while I was in law school that it was an absolute privilege to practice law. It was an honor to help others through the legal system. Our ability to practice law in this community is not an entitlement; it is not a right; it is a privilege.

Once Abe was convinced that message was instilled, he then said to me, "Laddy, if you are so privileged, remember that every single day, in return for the privilege, you must do a mitzvah." While the judge could have sent me out to do research on the Yiddish language, he saved me that effort by answering my quizzical look by explaining to me that a mitzvah is a good deed. He explained that mitzvahs could be small, big, or in between. But every day that I was lucky enough to possess a license to practice law, I must accomplish a mitzvah.

He said "Lad, when you wake up in the morning, think about what you can do for others and when you lay your head down on the pillow at night, make sure you did it."

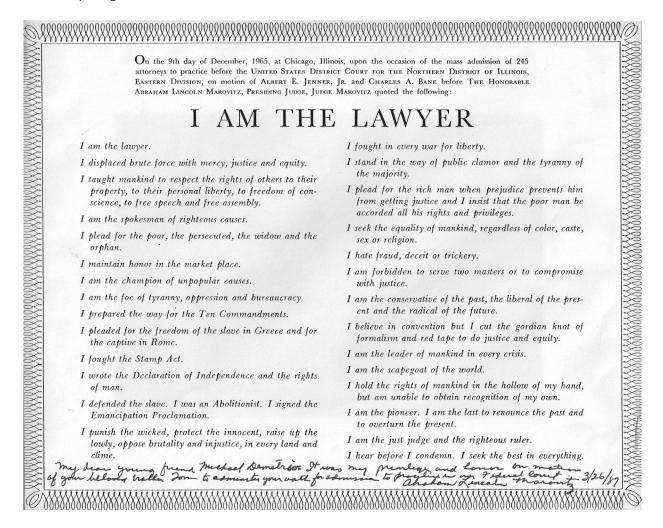
If you look at the history of those who have learned from Judge Marovitz, they all have in common that they have done and continue to do great deeds on behalf of those in need. Whether it be the work of Judge Bauer on behalf of the Scottish Home for the Elderly or of my brother by creating the the Lawyers Lend-A-Hand to Youth program, each of the mentors I have been privileged to know has exemplified Abe's lessons. But please know that it does not require a multimillion-dollar donation to fulfill Abe's message. Taking time out of your schedule to help a friend or stranger with a few kind words or advice will serve you and the profession well.

May 1 is a great day in our profession. I urge you to put aside the daily irritants that come with the practice of law and think about our profession and how privileged we are to be members of it. To that end, I am going to share with you some valuable words that Judge Abe imparted upon me when swearing me in as a member of the federal bar. For more than 30 years, these words have sat on my desk on a frame presented to me by His Honor with the personal inscription that comes at the end. The words will hopefully be an inspiration to

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you always to practice law at the highest level and to remember every day the privilege you enjoy and in turn inspire the mitzvah you must do in return for the privilege.



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