



Nancy J. Diehl

What Kind of Lawyer Are You?

I am honored to be the 70th President of the State Bar of Michigan. I intend to work hard and give my best in leading an organization of over 36,000 lawyers. I can't think of a group of people whose company I enjoy more. Now, perhaps I arrive at this conclusion not just from professional experience, but also from growing up with the best lawyer I know—my dad.

Growing up, kids always asked me what does your father do? I proudly said my dad is a lawyer. Inevitably, the next question was, what kind of lawyer is your dad? I can't tell you the number of times I was asked that question as I moved through school. The kids really wanted to know what kind of law my dad practiced or about the kind of big cases he handled. But, the question was always "what kind of lawyer is your dad?"

I didn't understand at the time why my dad couldn't talk about his cases at home. So, there was nothing to learn from dinner table conversations to help me answer the question. Also, at a very young age, I began to visit my dad's office in the Ford Building located in downtown Detroit. It looked very impressive to me, but it did not provide any clues either to answer the question "what kind of lawyer is your dad?"

Looking back, I realize that I always had the answer to the question. You see, to this day, my dad is the most honorable person I

know. He respects all individuals no matter their race, religion, or any other status. My dad worked hard to make a living to support his ever-growing family—I'm the third of twelve children. All those years, he made sure he could attend every parent teacher conference, father-daughter event, scouting activity, and every baseball or basketball game that one of his children was involved in. He was active in the community, taking on major projects. For example, when our school

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needed to close a street to make it safe for children crossing between school buildings, he volunteered his time and legal skill to get it accomplished. And, when he agreed with me that it was unfair that girls were not allowed to play in Little League, he started a girl's intramural softball league at our school.

What kind of a lawyer is my Dad? One who took his oath to heart and represents the profession with honor and principle. A lawyer who had time for his family, but also gave

back to his community. So, what kind of lawyer are you? What do your children say when they are asked what kind of lawyer is your dad or mom?

Are they as proud as I was to say, "My dad is a lawyer"? There is concern that over the years the reputation of lawyers has fallen. I believe improving the reputation of the profession is up to each of us individually, and ultimately depends on what kind of lawyers we are. Beyond the values of personal integrity, honesty, and respect for others, it is our responsibility to "continue to raise the bar" of the profession's reputation. We make a strong positive statement about lawyers through our involvement in community issues, non-profit boards, and accepting the responsibility of providing pro-bono services.

I am proud to be a lawyer and a leader in our profession. One of the best parts of being State Bar president is the opportunity to visit lawyers all over the state. I look forward to providing information on how the Bar can assist you in your practice, updating you about our ongoing Strategic Plan goals, and learning about your current concerns. Also and most importantly, I look forward to all of you sharing with me what kind of lawyers you are and what you believe would make a difference in uplifting our profession. ♦

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