

Elizabeth A. Jamieson, Chair of the Representative Assembly

I have given up my pre-meeting ritual of role playing with Elizabeth on how *not* to volunteer for new committees, boards, or projects. Still, it is forgone that requests for further involvement are met with a quick eye to Elizabeth and a seemingly involuntary arm raised to the sky. I have a pre-fabricated look of surprise when Elizabeth comes home and excitedly announces that she is chair-elect of a *new* committee or board. And so I apologetically admit that when she does tell me of new appointments and elections, I have a glazed-over look, like I've heard this before—sort of “de ja new Bar involvement.” I should not be surprised. It has been happening routinely for over 15 years. Yet when I am now forced to synthesize the sheer magnitude of her accomplishments, I am awestruck.

Elizabeth's compulsion to serve her profession began soon after arriving in Grand Rapids. Elizabeth has been on literally dozens of committees and boards (usually as an officer or chairperson) of various local, state, and national legal organizations. Her involvement has included the Grand Rapids Bar Association (Board of Trustees, Young Lawyers Section, and various committees), Women Lawyers Association of Michigan (Western Region President), State Bar of Michigan (Board of Commissioners, Finance Committee, Young Lawyers Section Chair, and various committees) and the American Bar Association (YLD Executive Council and Delegate). Elizabeth is an incessant, and more importantly effective, volunteer and leader. She has received awards of achievement from the American Bar Association for committee accomplishments and successful programs and events that she initiated.

It is true that nobody is famous in their own home. Even I am left wondering sometimes, how *my* wife, a gifted pack rat and voracious reader of celebrity schlock, can have



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the vision and fortitude to not only be involved on so many levels, but to feel compelled to lead and improve her profession. The obvious answer lies in her role models. Elizabeth is a third generation attorney. Her grandfather, William Parker Jamieson, practiced in Lansing. Elizabeth's father, William Garth Jamieson, practiced in Southfield and is a respected arbitrator and mediator. Elizabeth's uncle (and Bill's brother), Daniel K. Jamieson, practices in Kalamazoo. All three men are hard working, intelligent, highly ethical, and well respected in their communities. It is no wonder that growing up with such positive and personal ideals of lawyers

and the legal profession would inspire Elizabeth to be one herself and further compel her to advocate for and within her profession. It goes without saying that Elizabeth loves her work and is passionate about her Bar involvement.

But I am putting the cart before the horse. Born and raised in Grosse Pointe Woods, Elizabeth graduated from Grosse Pointe North High School in 1981. She attended Albion College. During her junior year, she attended the University of Augsburg in Germany. Before graduating in 1985, she met and instantly fell deeply in love with the man of her dreams. (OK—it took a little bit of courting and a lot of coercion but the outcome remains.) Elizabeth entered the Detroit College of Law and graduated in 1988. In 1989, we married and took up residence in Grand Rapids, because neither one's home town was good enough for the other. Elizabeth practiced insurance defense in Southfield and then Grand Rapids. She has been with Var-num, Riddering, Schmidt & Howlett LLP for nearly ten years, focusing her practice in creditor rights and bankruptcy.

Along the way, Elizabeth somehow found time to bring two beautiful young men into the world: Jamieson “Jamie” Pirochta (age 7) and Cameron “Cambo” Pirochta (age 6). They actively enjoy nearly every sport possible and attend first and second grade at Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic School where Elizabeth is naturally a very involved volunteer mother.

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Elizabeth A. Jamieson and family.

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As accomplished and involved as Elizabeth is, one would assume her to be self absorbed. This could not be further from the truth. She is hopelessly unassuming, idealistic, and ethical. Elizabeth has a deep sense of justice and fairness. She is a hard worker, immerses herself in projects, and approaches all challenges personally and professionally, with focus and a “cannot fail” optimism. No wonder she is such a target when things have to get done! When she sees a need for change or improvement, she commits herself to the cause, surrounds herself with like-minded

people, and sees the project through to completion. Elizabeth is a terrific motivator and when needed, a gifted persuader. Looking back, I realize that I do not usually get my way, but somehow I find myself thanking her for getting her way. Needless to say, I am very proud of my wife.

I might be slightly biased, but as history has shown, Elizabeth will serve her profession well and will certainly take the organized profession of law forward . . . and upward. ♦

Scott A. Pirochta, D.D.S. is Elizabeth's husband of 15 years.