

LORETTO KENNEDY

Refusing To Rest Until 'Everything Is In Line'

by Stephen Donnelly

Loretto Kennedy, a principal at **Chuhak & Tecson PC**, expects a lot out of herself. Her high standards, impeccable work ethic, and persistence paved the way for a successful career as a litigator, but her upbringing and family values are the foundation of Kennedy's career and, more importantly, of her personal character.

"Being the oldest of 10 and having seven brothers, we all did everything when it came to chores." The girls were not relegated to the kitchen, nor were the boys pigeonholed for yard work. "My brothers cleaned the bathroom as much as I did."

Kennedy's parents always did what was right, never needing to explicitly explain their actions. The house was always open for friends or family; "it might just mean we all eat a little less." The house was also open to those most vulnerable, as Kennedy's family began taking in newborn infants for Catholic Charities. In all, Kennedy estimates her parents took in around 70 newborn children. "You always have a little more to give," says Kennedy, describing her parents' constant example as a guiding light in her own life.

Now, Kennedy has a family of her own that keeps her grounded and focused. She met her

lends itself directly towards better serving her clients. Kennedy explains that while it is important to recognize one's own strengths, it's "even more important to recognize when others do certain things better than you."

A Great Motivator

Kennedy's big picture mindset allows her to draw from her resources and provide superior service to her clients. Kennedy credits her colleague Bill DeYoung, also a principal with Chuhak, for always having a theory of the case to carry throughout an entire proceeding.

DeYoung, who hired Kennedy as an associate



To keep track of whose turn it was to take care of the various chores, Kennedy's mother created a chart that outlined whose week it was to perform the task as well as a point system: negative points were allotted for messy rooms or unsatisfactory work. The children were not allowed out on weekends unless their point system was positive. Kennedy vividly remembers her best friend coming over to help her clean the refrigerator to balance her weekly "points" on a Friday evening so that they could go out for the night.

It was this upbringing and the foundation her parents established that, she explains, "really set the stage for me to expect nothing less."

husband of 23 years, Phil, in grammar school, and they have three children: Katie, 17, Joe, 15, and Lizzie, 13.

When she is not in the courtroom, Kennedy is a Girl Scout leader, cheerleading coach, St. Ignatius High School board member, or cheering on her children on the Lacrosse field, at the volleyball net, or the ice skating rink. Kennedy learned from her parents that the best gift she can give is to be a good person and set a good example by devoting her utmost effort to each task she sets out to complete.

"Whichever task I'm approaching, I give 150 percent," she explains.

Her ability to keep things in perspective

nearly 22 years ago while at Burke, Weaver & Prell, reciprocates Kennedy's praise. DeYoung was immediately impressed by Kennedy's drive, preparedness, and abilities.

"Loretto has always been a great motivator. She gets everyone's loyalty, from clerks to other attorneys, to work together and towards the ultimate goal" says DeYoung. "She can't rest until she knows everything is in line and all work is done."

DeYoung knows firsthand how passionate Kennedy is about her life—professional and personal. "During downtime, she genuinely loves to talk about her children, her husband, and work," he says.

Ultimately, Kennedy credits her family for the type of professional she is. “My family doesn’t care that I’m a lawyer; they just care I’m a good person.”

After graduating from Loyola University Chicago, Kennedy immediately headed to Champaign-Urbana to attend the University Of Illinois College Of Law.

After her first year of law school, she externed for Judge Nicholas Bua and clerked for the City of Chicago Corporations Office. Through these two positions, Kennedy got to observe a diverse range of cases unfold early on in her legal career. With Judge Bua, she observed oral arguments in federal court, while she also got work on Section 1983 cases through her position with the city. “It was really a microcosm of a small law firm.”

After her second year of law school, Kennedy worked at Clausen Miller, where she focused on medical malpractice cases under the direction of Mary O’Connor. Kennedy could not ask for a better mentor and credits O’Connor for entrusting her with responsibility. Kennedy got to observe and feel a part of trials and was not relegated to just doing research and writing.

“I got to see what the background work leads to eventually. Mary was a tremendous supporter of that idea and gave great

is ultimately focused on getting the best result for her clients: inside the courtroom and out.

“When a client is facing a large issue or problem and they call on us to help, I think that

Kennedy teamed up with other women attorneys in her office to help create Women Helping Women, a group formed by women, for women, which meets biannually and enables



Kennedy and her family on vacation. From left: Son Joe; Kennedy; daughter Katie; husband, Phil; and daughter Lizzie.

is really satisfying,” says Kennedy. “Most of our clients are top-notch business people, and to have confidence in us when they are facing something significant is a rewarding feeling.”

The trust her clients place in her makes her

women business leaders to simultaneously network, develop business and serve the community.

Recently, the group collected teddy bears for Red Cross, and before that the women focused their efforts towards helping women veterans by collecting business attire. This fall, the group will celebrate its seventh event and plans to continue its success and further its goals.

Kennedy is also a proud member of the International Aviation Womens Association. “It’s a wonderful resource for me to hear and see women in the aviation field in particular and how they rose to the position they currently hold,” she says, describing each gathering as an opportunity to celebrate accomplishments and share different approaches to legal topics.

Kennedy can recall the exact moment she knew she wanted to be an attorney: the Christmas Spirit Show with her father when she was in junior high.

“I was so in awe of the production,” she recalls, realizing at that moment that “if I become a lawyer, I can be in the show.”

Kennedy performed in the Christmas Spirit Show for nearly 20 years. And she has not traded in her love of theatrics for a business suit. Kennedy still sings in her parish choir with her daughter Katie, for the Celtic Legal Society (of which she is currently the president), and in a cover band made up of fellow attorneys.

By giving each task she performs the utmost attention and effort, she not only better serves her clients but also her family and herself.

“It’s not always perfect. Striking the balance is an ongoing process for any attorney, and I think having the life outside the office really gives the perspective that makes you a better lawyer.” ■



Kennedy with her nine siblings and parents at a recent family party.

perspective,” she recalls.

While many of her classmates were toiling behind the scenes, conducting research, and writing briefs, Kennedy was gaining valuable experience.

Gaining Clients’ Confidence

Kennedy stayed with Clausen Miller after graduating law school, then worked at Burke, Weaver & Prell until moving to Chuhak & Tecson, where she focuses on litigation, aviation litigation, and transactions.

While she is a litigator at her core, Kennedy

job even more rewarding and makes Kennedy’s relationship with her clients very personal.

“We don’t use a cookie-cutter approach to anything,” explains Kennedy. “Whether it’s a \$5,000 invoice or an airline disaster, we develop a plan and have our eye on the ball. The tactical approach is something unique to our practice.”

While Kennedy cannot claim credit for Chuhak’s motto, “Right there with you,” the phrase sums what it means to her to be a great lawyer and counselor. “We’re there for victories and also there for the most trying times,” she says.