

It was the spring of 1980, and I was a senior at Marquette University. I was an average student with average grades. I was one of two student representatives on the university's Academic Area Budget Committee. The other members of this committee were the deans from the colleges and schools within the university. One of the members of this committee was Marquette University Law School Dean Robert F. Boden. After a committee meeting one day, I introduced myself to Dean Boden. I told him that I had just applied for admission to the Law School and asked for his help. He said, "Call me in two weeks."

As time went by, I was sure that he had forgotten all about it. As suggested, however, I called the dean and then met with him in his office. In the meeting, I started to tell Dean Boden about my qualifications for admission—that I was an Eagle Scout and. . . .

He interrupted me and said, "You are also on the Academic Area Budget Committee?"

And I said, "Yes, of course." I quickly realized the disconnect in that he was impressed with my

membership on a university committee, while I was trying to tell him how important it was that I was involved with scouting. Nevertheless, it seemed that the dean showed a *genuine* interest in me, and I remember him saying he'd see what he could do to help. After meeting Dean Boden, I wondered if I had done the right thing by asking him for help.

Sometime after my meeting with Dean Boden, and much to my relief, I was admitted to the Law School.

Once in a while I think about Dean Boden's kind gesture. It has served as an example for me, and I have paid it forward. Many, many times people have asked me for help, and I have tried to oblige them in any way that I can. The door to opportunity opened for me through an act of kindness, so why shouldn't I do the same thing? I urge you to do the same thing for anyone who asks for your help.

The education that I received at Marquette University Law School changed my life forever. Let the education you receive at this Law School change your life forever, too.

Thank you. ■

Sports Law Banquet | James L. Perzik

L.A. Lakers General Counsel Receives Joseph E. O'Neill Award

On April 25, 2014, at the annual Marquette Law School Sports Law Banquet, James L. Perzik received the National Sports Law Institute's Joseph E. O'Neill Award. The award, remembering a late partner at Davis & Kuelthau, is given annually to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the field of sports law while exemplifying the highest ethical standards. Mr. Perzik is the senior vice president of legal affairs and secretary of the National Basketball Association's Los Angeles Lakers and the team's former longtime general counsel. In addition to providing a glimpse into his work over the years for one of the nation's great sports franchises, his remarks in receiving the award offer, both incidentally and directly, wise counsel for Marquette law students interested in sports law.

Dean Kearney, Professors Mitten and Anderson, the O'Neill family, Chuck Henderson and his colleagues at Davis & Kuelthau, my good friend Professor Parlow, faculty, students, and anyone whom I may have missed:

First, I would like to thank the O'Neill family for creating the Joseph E. O'Neill Award and for its support of the award by Chuck Henderson and his firm. Second, I would like to thank those who believed that I should be the recipient of the award. It is my great honor to accept it. Again, I thank you all.

It was suggested that, given the number of students present this evening, I describe my path to becoming the general counsel of the Los Angeles Lakers. I do quite a bit of mentoring, and this is probably the question that I am asked most often.

I graduated from the school of business at the University of Southern California (USC) with a major in accounting. I received my CPA certificate and engaged in the practice of accounting. I primarily dealt in the areas of business and tax consulting. After seven years of practice, I thought that I could learn more about taxes if I went to law school.

“Most sports law opportunities do not have the capacity to teach you how to be a lawyer, and therefore the people involved generally look for experienced lawyers. And no matter what happens, if you get the experience, you will always be a lawyer.”

I carried out that decision by attending the law school at USC in the evening and continuing to work during the day. After graduation, I joined a small local Los Angeles law firm that attracted some quality clients. While at the firm, I was able to pursue my interests in business and tax. Several years after I joined the firm, we obtained a client who was engaged in the creation and operation of real estate syndications, which, at that time, were a very popular and permitted tax shelter. My client was a bright man who, in his early 20s, had obtained a Ph.D. in physical chemistry, a rather exotic science. He applied his scientific thinking to the real estate business and was quite successful. He was also a sports nut. As a result, I represented him in his acquisition of a franchise for World Team Tennis in Los Angeles, which he moved to the Forum in Inglewood, California, the home of the Los Angeles Lakers and the Los Angeles Kings. At the time, the Forum, the Lakers, and the Kings were all owned by Jack Kent Cooke.

It did not take long before my client, Dr. Jerry Buss, started meeting with Mr. Cooke for the purpose of buying the Forum, Lakers, and Kings. In May 1979, after extended negotiations, Dr. Buss agreed to purchase all of the entities plus a 13,000-acre ranch north of Los Angeles for \$67.5 million, the largest transaction in sports at the time. Following the closing of the deal, our firm

continued to represent Dr. Buss in all of his activities, including his sports activities, until we dissolved our law firm at the end of 1990.

Dr. Buss then asked me to join him as general counsel of all of his business activities.

One of the matters in which I was involved during my first year with the Lakers was to deal with the discovery of the fact that Earvin “Magic” Johnson had HIV. It was a very emotional period. But with time, it has turned out well for Magic and the thousands of people who were helped because of the publicity and treatments that followed.

In 1985, I assisted Dr. Buss in forming one of the first regional sports networks (RSNs) in the country. Fox Sports eventually acquired this RSN, and that led

to its formation of RSNs throughout the country. My daily duties included helping with the operation of the Lakers, the Kings, an indoor soccer team, tennis events, a volleyball team, an indoor roller hockey team, the world’s largest regularly scheduled boxing program, concerts, and other events held at the Forum. I am involved with all player contracts of the Lakers, all player trades, the salary cap, and other collective bargaining matters. I also represented the Lakers in the move to the Staples Center and the recent 25-year, \$5 billion agreement between the Lakers and



James L. Perzik and Professor Matthew J. Parlow

Time Warner's new Los Angeles RSN. My 34 years representing the Lakers have been a fun and challenging ride, which has been rewarded with 10 NBA championships and 16 NBA Finals appearances.

I have always loved sports; however, at no time along the way did I ever have in mind a career in sports. It just happened. Many of my peers obtained their positions in a similar manner; they just happened to be in the right place when the opportunity arose. This does not mean that you cannot get into sports if that is your goal, but it is something that you need to work at in order to place yourself in the best possible position when the opportunity does arrive.

You must first decide whether you want to be in sports or whether you want to be a lawyer who does sports law. Not everyone who graduates from law school wants to be a lawyer. Most do. When you graduate, you have the tools to be a lawyer, but you are not yet a lawyer. If you want to be a lawyer in sports, I strongly advise that you work in a law firm environment for three to five years and obtain experience. The experience will definitely benefit you. Most sports law opportunities do not have the capacity to teach you how to be a lawyer, and therefore the people involved generally look for

experienced lawyers. And no matter what happens, if you get the experience, you will always be a lawyer.

While you are practicing law, some of the ways that you can try to move above the competition for a sports law position include participating in organizations that give you the opportunity to meet and work with lawyers in the area of sports law. Two of those organizations are the Sports Lawyers Association and the Forum on Entertainment and Sports Industries of the American Bar Association. To have a better chance of succeeding, you should not merely attend the meetings. You should become active. Volunteer to be on committees, write articles for their journals, and when you are out in practice, seek opportunities to speak at their meetings and other events. Get yourself known by those in the profession who are also active in these organizations. This has worked for some people whom I know. Talk to those in the field, ask them for advice—and whether they can recommend someone else who can provide you with more advice. Keep in touch with those with whom you have spoken. I hope that you are successful with whatever approach you take.

I wish you all good luck in your careers.

And, again, I thank you for this evening. ■

Marquette Law Review 1933 Editorial

“Leadership from the Bench”

The *Marquette Law Review*, established in 1916, contains not just longer-form articles and student comments but also, over the years, such other items as memorials, historical notes about the Law School, and speeches. The following “editorial,” as the *Law Review* itself termed it, was published in June 1933 and is among the more unusual entries. We offer it as a glimpse into our past.

Like a voice “crying out in the wilderness” come two recent dissenting opinions¹ written by Louis D. Brandeis, associate justice of the United States Supreme Court. The distressing situation in this country, bringing in its wake social and economic chaos, has given the people leadership in government; and, as if to keep pace with the constructive forces being brought to bear on administrative problems, the unprecedented pronouncements by Mr. Justice Brandeis have given

the people, but more particularly the courts, standards for determining our future policy in matters of social and economic concern.

It has been said that one who sits upon the bench of the Federal Supreme Court should be primarily a statesman. Certainly the career of Mr. Chief Justice Marshall attests the wisdom of this statement. Today, more than ever before, this court is concerned chiefly with problems of policy; the merits of the particular controversy are often brushed aside in an effort to get at the underlying cross currents of public welfare. The adequate performance of such a function requires a

¹ *New State Ice Co. v. Liebmann*, 285 U.S. 262 (1932); *Louis K. Liggett Co. v. Lee*, 288 U.S. 517 (1933).