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Topic for the Quarter

What's in a Name and Amicus Curiae Briefs

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Names: No matter who we are, what we do, where we come from ... we all have one thing in common ... we all have a name. Our names have a history. Our names tell a story. Our names identify us, as people. So, what's in a name? For attorneys, our name is everything. We want people to recognize us by the reputation we have built up over the years.

When attorneys belong to a law firm, the name of the firm is also important. What's in the name of a law firm? Well, for one thing, our reputation. When our law firm name is spoken, we hope that it speaks of our reputation for excellence, personal service and commitment to community. Those are some of the things which make up the invisible thing called "our good name." It takes time to build a name and even more time to build a good name. We have spent many hours of service with our clients and community to build up our good name. Having said all of this, our firm has decided to change our name. We are no longer Stellpflug, Janssen, Hammer, Kirschling & Bartels, S.C. That name, while a part of our history, is just that, history. Our new name is ...



With this name change, as with all change, there have been many questions. What was wrong with the "old" name? Was the firm bought out? What happened to all of the named partners? The short answer to the name change is this – we had to change the name. Under the ethical rules we attorneys live by, when a named partner leaves a firm for a public office, that partner's name must be removed from the firm name. On April 18, 2008, Marc Hammer left our firm to become a Brown County Circuit Court judge. Our loss is Brown County's gain. With Attorney Hammer's departure, we are removing his name from all signs, letterhead, directories, websites, business cards, notepads, mugs, pens, etc. You get the idea. This name change thing has been a big deal for us. In the end, life goes on. We adapt. We re-group. That is what we have done, as a law firm. So, now you know the rest of the story. It's that simple. No power plays. No back door deals. Just a shorter name. New name, same people, same legal expertise, new chapter in our history.

Attorney Bouressa Joins Stellpflug Law: Our firm is excited to announce the addition of Attorney Terence Bouressa. In July, 2008, Attorney Bouressa joined our firm as a partner. Attorney Bouressa graduated with a Bachelor of Science from the University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh. He received his law degree from Pepperdine University School of Law in 1983. Before joining Stellpflug Law, Attorney Bouressa had been a partner at Bouressa and Patteson, Green Bay, for the past 10 years.



Terence Bouressa

Attorney Bouressa concentrates his practice in the areas of litigation, personal injury, worker's compensation, employment law, municipal law and mediation. We are also pleased to introduce Emily Johnson as the newest addition to our support staff. Emily is a paralegal who works with Attorney Bouressa. Emily has been working with Attorney Bouressa for the past 7 years.

Amicus Curiae Briefs: All of our attorneys are involved with various legal organizations. Those organizations include national, state and local bar associations. A group of our attorneys are members of the Wisconsin Association for Justice (WAJ). This is an organization comprised of attorneys who represent consumers who have been injured. Among other things, the WAJ monitors legislative and judicial developments in this area of law. When significant legal issues make their way to Wisconsin's Supreme Court, the WAJ often files an amicus curiae brief. Amicus curiae means "friend of the court." An amicus is a non-party with a strong interest in the subject matter of the case. An amicus has no immediate stake in the outcome of the case. This brings a level of credibility which a party may not have. A well written amicus brief is a valuable aid to the court when the legal issues are technical, complex or will have a far reaching effect on future cases. Procedurally, any non-party, wishing to file an amicus brief, must file a motion, requesting permission to file it. The motion must identify the person's interest in the action and state why a brief is "desirable." An amicus is typically not allowed to participate in oral arguments. For more information on the history and rules pertaining to amicus curiae briefs, go to WisBar.org, where there is an archive of articles from the Wisconsin Lawyer. The Friend of the Court Brief article is at Vol. 80, No. 5, May, 2007.

Our Willingness to Volunteer: Recently, two attorneys from our firm (Steve Hitzeman and Debra DeLeers) volunteered their time to the WAJ, to research and write an amicus curiae brief. The issue addressed was what constitutes a "disfigurement" in a worker's compensation claim. The case is titled **County of Dane v. Labor and Industry Review Commission and Gloria N. Graham** (Appeal No. 3006AP2695). Once the brief was completed, it was sent electronically to the WAJ office in Madison. The staff at the WAJ then assembled the brief and filed it with the Wisconsin Supreme Court. Hats off to attorneys Hitzeman and DeLeers for a job well done. This is just one of the ways our firm gives back to the legal community we are a part of.



Steve Hitzeman



Debra DeLeers