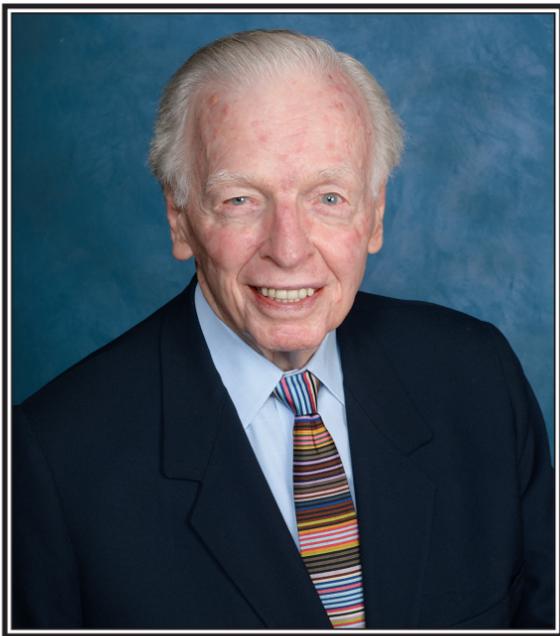


# Lunch with Legends

## JOHN T. BALLANTINE

Hammad M. Khan



**Jack is a recipient of the LBA's 2005 Judge Benjamin F. Shobe Civility & Professionalism Award. In 2012, he received the American Inns of Court Professionalism Award for the Sixth Circuit.**

**Are you a "legend" or experienced Louisville attorney who wants to spend a lunch hour with a member of the Young Lawyers Section?**

**OR, are you a member of the Young Lawyers Section that also likes lunch?**

**Please contact the 2017 Chair of the Young Lawyers Section, Hammad Khan at [HKhan@laslou.org](mailto:HKhan@laslou.org), for more information on how to participate in the next "Lunch with Legends."**

At its first section meeting of 2017, the LBA Young Lawyers Section convened to discuss the trajectory of the section for the upcoming year. Specifically, section members proposed ideas for CLEs, community service, and networking events. One idea that garnered the most conversation at this meeting was a method for new attorneys to meet the more seasoned members of the local legal community. At the end of 2016, members of the LBA's Young Lawyers and Emeritus sections gathered to focus on setting up a model to promote more interaction between new and experienced members. A result of this meeting of the minds was the "Lunch with Legends" series.

For the second installment of the "Lunch with Legends" series, I was called upon to interview a legend within our local legal community. I had the honor and privilege to share a meal and conversation with an individual whose legal career is as remarkable as his dedication to civility is strong: John "Jack" T. Ballantine of Stoll Keenon Ogden.

Prior to meeting Jack for lunch, I conducted research into his professional career to prepare some talking points. Jack and I met for lunch on an uncharacteristically warm February afternoon at Fourth Street Live. Our lunch meeting began with familiar pleasantries, but it rapidly morphed into an engaging conversation about the transformation of law practice in general and professionalism and civility more specifically.

Our conversation began with Jack relaying to me one of his most influential experiences as a young attorney. After law school at Harvard, he served as a law clerk for the Hon. Henry L. Brooks of the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Kentucky. In that role, he attended many federal court proceedings. On one such occasion, Jack recounted, the judge happened to catch an attorney being less than truthful to the court. He explained this was a defining moment for him as a young attorney because he witnessed the judge severely admonish this attorney for lack of complete candor.

Jack's take-away from this experience was to always remain honest with the courts, his clients and his peers. This experience began laying the foundation for a career that would later be marked with recognition of his professionalism in the practice of law. Jack is a recipient of the LBA's 2005 Judge Benjamin F. Shobe Civility & Professionalism Award. In 2012, he received the American Inns of Court Professionalism Award for the Sixth Circuit.

Through my discussion with Jack about his distinguished

career, I quickly recognized his deep devotion to professionalism and civility. After we shared a conversation about his path to Harvard Law School and his work as a young lawyer, we spent a considerable amount of time discussing the evolution of law practice and the need for continued civility in the practice of law.

Given Jack's decorated career that spans decades, I was eager to hear from him how the practice of law, particularly the role of civility, has changed over the years. Jack acknowledged that the practice of law has changed dramatically over the years. For instance, the use of technology—of which Jack admitted to using very little—has changed the legal profession's landscape considerably, he noted. Nevertheless, he stressed that there are some basic principles that remain timeless, civility being one of them.

One critical piece of advice Jack imparted to me and to other new attorneys: "Remain calm; remain cool." Jack's perspective on remaining calm and cool stemmed from the tried and true understanding that an attorney need not engage in berating theatrics in and out of the courtroom to serve his/her client. For instance, he observed, if an attorney has some questions about a discovery request or a pending motion, it is perfectly acceptable to call opposing counsel and discuss the matter, perhaps even over a meal. Jack shared how in his practice he would often break bread with opposing counsel to resolve matters ethically, amicably, professionally and with respect. Again, Jack said, "Stay cool."

During our conversation about civility in law, Jack presented me with an article from the February 2017 issue of the ABA Journal by current ABA President Linda A. Klein. The article, titled "One Word: Civility," cautioned attorneys that we, as leaders of society, "must ensure that civility once again becomes a quality that defines us." This article echoes themes of civility that Jack and I discussed during our conversation, reinforcing his advice of remaining calm and respectful with the courts, colleagues, and clients.

On my way back to my office after lunch with Jack, I further pondered his illustrious career. Of all the tangible and intangible pro tips I gained from him, what stood out the most to me was his humility and, yes, his civility. Jack is a lawyer who puts his words and principles into action. I am honored to have shared a meal and an insightful conversation with such an extraordinary legend.

Hammad M. Khan is a staff attorney at the Legal Aid Society. ■



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