

# Legal NEWSLETTER



*Celebrating*  
**140**  
*years of excellence*

## WHAT IS A CLIENT?

### *Twenty Years Later*

A message from Co-Managing Partners

Amy J. Eddy and Keith J. Pilger

Twenty years ago, as the firm celebrated its 120th anniversary, our former Managing Partner, Gerald M. O'Brien, shared a message entitled "What Is a Client?" It contained a simple but powerful reminder:

"A client is the most important person in the office. Clients are not dependent on us; we are dependent on them. Clients are not an interruption of our work; they are the purpose of it."

Those words helped shape the culture of our firm and remain as relevant today as they were when they were first written.

Continued on the back page...

*This publication is not intended to provide legal advice, but rather insight and awareness into legal issues that we feel could be useful to our clients and friends. Actual resolution of legal issues depends upon many factors, including variations of facts and state and federal laws.*

ANDERSON O'BRIEN LLP

# BUILT ON TRADITION, STRENGTHENED BY TEAMWORK

By Attorney Amy Eddy

When our firm was founded in Stevens Point in 1886 by Byron B. Park and Gilbert L. Park, the legal profession looked very different than it does today. Most attorneys practiced alone, serving clients as sole practitioners with limited opportunities for collaboration or specialization. The Park brothers envisioned something different.

They were influenced by a family tradition of public service and leadership. Their father, the Honorable Gilbert L. Park, served as Judge of Wisconsin's Seventh Judicial District and helped establish a legacy of legal excellence that would continue for generations.

The firm's founders were also deeply invested in the future of their community. Byron B. Park played a significant role in securing a Normal School for Stevens Point—a teacher-training institution that would educate generations of Wisconsin educators. That institution eventually evolved into what is now the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, one of the region's most important educational institutions.

From 1911 to 1954 Attorney William E. Fisher helped set the firm's high standard for legal excellence, with his son, Robert A. Fisher, continuing the tradition of excellence when he joined the firm in 1948. From the beginning, the firm's success was rooted in a forward-thinking idea: great legal service is strengthened by teamwork.

Rather than operating as individual practitioners, the firm developed a tradition of mentoring and developing attorneys who would become future partners and leaders. Young lawyers were welcomed into the practice, often beginning as law clerks during their legal studies and learning directly from experienced attorneys. This commitment to mentorship created continuity, preserved institutional knowledge, and ensured that each generation of attorneys was prepared to serve clients with the highest level of professionalism.

Equally important was the firm's commitment to diversification. As the legal needs of clients grew more complex during the 1930s and 1940s, the firm expanded by adding attorneys with expertise in different areas of

the law. Attorney Clifford W. Peickert, a partner from 1937 to 1973, worked to establish a diversified legal team. This allowed the firm to provide broader and more sophisticated services to businesses, individuals, and families throughout Central Wisconsin.

What began as a practical advantage soon became a defining characteristic of the firm. By bringing together attorneys with varying strengths and areas of focus, clients gained access to a depth of knowledge that few firms of the era could provide. Matters could be approached collaboratively, drawing upon multiple perspectives and experiences to develop effective solutions.

When Jack Shannon joined the firm in 1954, having received a job offer from Hiram D. Anderson, there were four attorneys and three office staff, growing to 16 attorneys and 18 support staff over his career.

These traditions—teamwork, mentorship, and diversification—remain the foundation of our firm today.

For 140 years, we have continued to grow while staying true to the principles established by our founders. We believe that clients are best served when talented attorneys work together, when knowledge is shared across generations, and when a firm is equipped to address the diverse legal challenges faced by businesses, individuals, and families.

Our full-service law firm did not emerge overnight. It developed over decades through the deliberate efforts of attorneys who embraced collaboration, invested in future generations of lawyers, and expanded their expertise to meet the changing needs of their clients.

As we look toward the future, we remain proud of the traditions that have guided us since 1886. They are more than part of our history—they are the reason we continue to serve our clients and communities with the same commitment to excellence that inspired our founders nearly a century and a half ago.◇

## BIG ENOUGH TO WIN, SMALL ENOUGH TO CARE.

# GIVING BACK TO OUR COMMUNITY

By Attorney Keith Pilger

At Anderson O'Brien, LLP we believe it is important to not just live and work in Central Wisconsin, but also to be involved in our community. Community involvement is not just a suggestion at the firm, it is an expectation for our attorneys and staff. This expectation comes from a long history of giving back to our community in several ways.

Our attorneys can be found on many of the boards of local charitable organizations (currently over 25 different organizations) often serving in leadership roles. Whether it is serving as the President of a local Board of Directors, serving as the local United Way Drive Chairs, or providing pro bono legal services, our attorneys recognize the importance of donating their time and expertise to further the efforts of local charitable organizations.

In addition to our time and expertise, our firm has also contributed to many of the capital and annual campaigns to support local organizations, such as the YMCA Annual Campaign, the UWSP Pink Game, and the annual Walk for Hope. Anderson O'Brien, LLP has also been a long-time Corporate Cornerstone Partner of the United Way's Annual Campaign.

Beyond giving back to our local community, we have also given our time to better our profession and provide access to legal services to the underserved. Our attorneys have served in many leadership roles within the State Bar of Wisconsin, including as State Bar President. We have also contributed countless pro bono hours to organizations like Legal Aid, which provides legal services to those who otherwise cannot afford them.

We do these things not for the recognition, but for the betterment of our community. It is often said that "a rising tide floats all boats" and we believe that we all benefit from a better and healthier community.

To celebrate this tradition of giving back and our 140 years of service to our community, we are committing

to making an additional donation this year to many of the local organizations that we have supported over the years, so that they may continue the great work through which we all benefit.◇

## ***Our History. Our Community. Our Commitment.***

**1886 - Our firm was established at 933 A Main.**



**1950 - Our firm expanded to a new building to meet the growing needs of our clients.**



**1979 - Our firm expanded again to 1257 Main St.**



**1986 - New IBM Displaywriters**



# Lawyers Where You Live.

# THROUGH THE YEARS



## Celebrating 140 Years of Excellence.

Amy J. Eddy  
Bradley A. Yanke  
Brent W. Jacobson  
Brian G. Formella

Daniel F. Schmeeckle  
David M. James  
Donna L. Ginzl  
Heather M. Huebner

Kamryn K. Ramker  
Katherine A. Young  
Keith J. Pilger  
Richard H. Fuller

Ross R. Slovensky  
Steven H. Thompson

# REELING IN THE YEARS

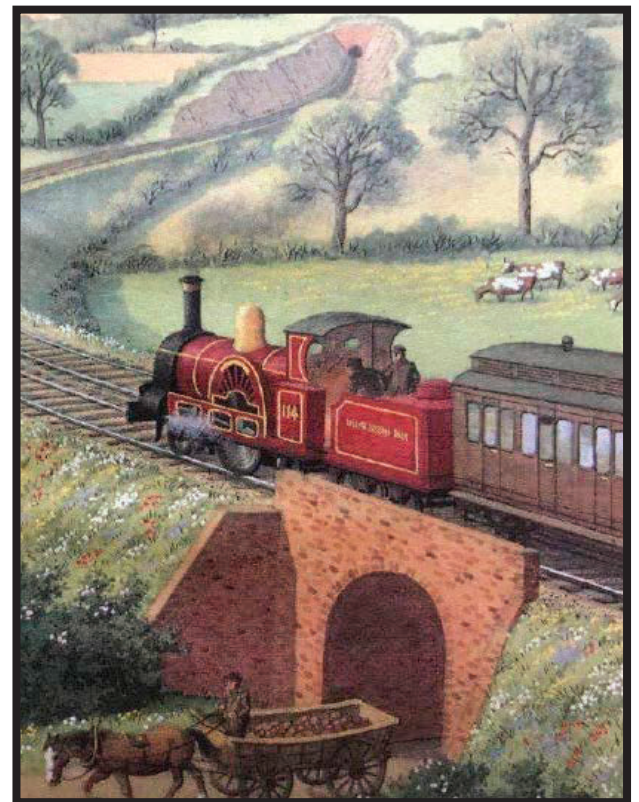
By Attorney Daniel Schmeeckle

Precedent is a word that resonates deeply in the legal profession. Aside from the commonly known meaning of prior in time, precedent is the “making of law by a court in recognizing and applying new rules while administering justice.” This firm, from its origins as Park & Park to today’s Anderson O’Brien, LLP has been instrumental in the development of the law in Wisconsin.

This article pays homage to those attorneys who preceded us and their involvement in precedent-setting decisions. Harkening back to simpler times, our 19th century brethren’s cases involved the ordinary disputes of their times: horses, railroads, logs and crops. Today, the subject matter has changed, but Anderson O’Brien, LLP’s dedication to advocating for its clients remains. What follows is a brief synopsis of some of the earliest causes advanced and the law created by the pioneering lawyers of this firm.

1889 – The law firm of Lamoreux & Park (now Anderson O’Brien, LLP) represented a gambler who lost \$265 in the form of gold and silver coins playing cards in a deep state of intoxication. Following the loss at the poker table, the gambler made an affidavit for the arrest of the winners hoping to regain what had been lost. The winners were arrested, forfeiting their illegal profit. Turning the tables, the loser won. As every gambler knows, the secret to survival is knowing when to walk away. *Stoddard v. Burt*, 75 Wis. 107, 43 N.W. 737 (1889).

1889 – Like a classic country song, this case involves a horse and a train. The horse, a colt, was killed by a locomotive. Representing the railroad, this firm secured victory by proving the horse’s owner knew the fence meant to keep the colt in its pasture had been destroyed. *Martin v. Stewart*, 73 Wis. 553, 41 N.W. 535 (1889).



Continued on the back page...

## Celebrating 140 Years of Excellence.

Amy J. Eddy  
Bradley A. Yanke  
Brent W. Jacobson  
Brian G. Formella

Daniel F. Schmeeckle  
David M. James  
Donna L. Ginzl  
Heather M. Huebner

Kamryn K. Ramker  
Katherine A. Young  
Keith J. Pilger  
Richard H. Fuller

Ross R. Slovensky  
Steven H. Thompson

(continued from front page), What is a Client?

While much has changed in the practice of law over the past two decades—technology, communication, and client expectations among them—the fundamental principle has not: our clients place their trust in us during some of the most important moments of their lives, businesses, and families.

Today, we would add that a client is more than a file, a case number, or a transaction. A client is a person seeking guidance, clarity, and confidence. They expect not only legal knowledge, but responsiveness, empathy, and practical solutions. They want an attorney who listens carefully, communicates clearly, and understands the impact our work has on their lives.

A client entrusts us with matters that are often deeply personal, financially significant, or emotionally challenging. That trust is earned every day through our professionalism, our preparation, and our commitment to service.

As our predecessor reminded us, serving our clients is not an interruption of our work—it **IS** our work. Every phone call returned, every document prepared, every question answered, and every challenge solved contributes to the confidence our clients place in this firm.

As co-managing partners; we are grateful to inherit a culture built on those values. We know that our partners, associates, and staff remain committed to carrying these values forward while continuing to evolve and improve the way we serve those who choose us as their trusted advisors. The practice of law may continue to change, but our purpose remains the same: to provide exceptional legal counsel, to treat every client with respect and dignity, and to earn the trust that is the foundation of every successful attorney-client relationship.

Twenty years later, we believe our former Managing Partner got it exactly right: **our clients are not simply part of our business—they are the reason for it.**◊

(continued from inside) Reeling in the Years

1898 – Lamoreux & Park (now Anderson O’Brien, LLP) represented a wagon owner whose horses broke through a rotting bridge as it passed over, injuring the horses. The lawsuit hinged on whether the township failed to keep the bridge in good repair or whether the waggoneer was responsible for attempting to cross a bridge that was in disrepair. Success for the waggoneer was built on testimony that the bridge’s timbers were old and rotten, that its rotten condition caused the accident, and the township knew of its dangerous condition for at least five years. *Grimm v. Washburn*, 100 Wis. 229, 75 N.W. 984 (1898).

1921 – Fisher & Cashin (now Anderson O’Brien, LLP) represented a lumber company whose logs were carried by floodwaters and deposited on another’s land. During the retrieval of the logs by the lumber company, the landowner claimed the lumber company damaged their land. Ruling in favor of the lumber company, the Wisconsin Supreme Court laid down the law that “where the property of a person has been carried upon the land of another by flood he has a right to recover its possession and for that purpose to go upon the land where it lies and remove it, and under such circumstances is not liable for nominal damages.”

1941 – The town of Plover imposed a tax on a sanatorium, represented by Fisher, Cashin & Reinholdt (now Anderson O’Brien, LLP). After paying the property tax, the sanatorium, whose sisters cared for “tubercular patients” without compensation, sued to recover the payment. After declaring the sanatorium to be a charitable institution with a benevolent purpose, the town of Plover was ordered to repay the sanatorium. *Order of Sisters of St. Joseph v. Plover*, 239 Wis. 278, 1 N.W.2d 173 (1941).◊



1257 Main Street | P.O. Box 228 | Stevens Point, WI 54481-0228

**715-344-0890 | [andlaw.com](http://andlaw.com)**

