



Professionalism

Profile in Professionalism: Gary Lesser

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Gary Lesser's career story in Palm Beach County is well known. His grandfather, Joseph Lesser, formed the Lesser law firm in 1927. Joseph Lesser believed in hard work, professionalism and personal attention for his clients. He also believed in active community involvement and volunteered for a wide spectrum of causes. His legacy was carried on by Gary's father, Shepard Lesser. Gary speaks with great pride of the examples set by his grandfather and dad and has run a successful law practice, focusing on serious personal injury and wrongful death cases. As I said, that part of the Lesser family tradition in Palm Beach County is well known.

But what makes Gary deserving in recognition in professionalism goes beyond running a successful law firm and being involved in the community. (For his part, Gary has chaired bar and charitable organizations, and has been active in fund raising for worthy causes. He has received a number of awards for his contributions in the community.)

To deserve recognition for professionalism, I believe it is also important to demonstrate scholarship in legal ethics and professionalism. Gary has done that by serving on the Florida Bar's Professional Ethics Committee for a number of years. He took on a leadership role by acting as Vice Chair from 2001-2003 and then as Chair for the year 2003-2004. This is a committee which publishes ethics decisions relied upon by Florida Bar members and The Florida Bar staff in advising lawyers on difficult ethics questions. He also served as chair of the Palm Beach County Bar Association's Professionalism Committee. Gary and I served as Co-Chairs for a number of years, not only because of the efficiency in dividing up the work of the Chair, but also because we quickly became friends and enjoyed working together on professionalism committee projects.

Perhaps the most important reason why Gary deserves recognition is that professionalism is a real challenge for any active and busy trial lawyer. In the quiet setting of a professionalism

committee meeting, or at a Bar seminar, we all agree on the appropriate norms of behavior.

Professionalism is an easy topic to discuss. Where it becomes hard is in the day-to-day interaction with clients, difficult opposing counsel and overworked judges. In those settings, the professional lawyer finds the high road to be a lonely path. Gary and I remain great friends to this day and often exchange experiences in dealing with tough circumstances. Gary always has good suggestions for how to behave ethically and professionally, when every lawyer instinct tempts to do otherwise. Let us recognize the fine example he sets for the legal community.

