



By Rebecca Larsen

Renaud Cook Drury Mesaros, PA

Renaud Cook Drury Mesaros, PA is a distinctive law firm built on experience, genuine workplace camaraderie, and vast resources. At sixty years old, this firm has stood the test of time and is anything but typical.

At least twice a month, Renaud Cook Drury Mesaros, PA, holds an in-house “docket call” on Wednesday afternoons with as many as 30 lawyers from the Firm meeting in a conference room to discuss an ongoing case. “An attorney may present a case that is getting ready for mediation or for trial,” said attorney Steven G. Mesaros of the Firm’s management committee. “The client is invited to attend plus as many attorneys who can, and our lawyers make suggestions and evaluate the case. Young lawyers and more experienced lawyers share different ideas for handling the case. And it’s very popular with clients, of course; it’s free.”

This interchange of ideas is important to the Firm because it helps maintain the atmosphere of “small firm collegiality” among our 46 attorneys, said attorney David McDowell, also a member of the Firm’s management committee. “We see a benefit to the exchange of ideas as well as just getting the attorneys together to interact,” said McDowell.



Steven G. Mesaros, President and Managing Shareholder

“Even if one of the attorneys attending does not contribute much to the discussion, he/she hopefully gains something by being present and observing how others approach a case or a problem,” said Mesaros.

Renaud Cook Drury Mesaros, one of Arizona’s top litigation firms, recently celebrated its 60th anniversary. RCDM began in 1950 when Robert Renaud joined Ted McKesson to form the firm of McKesson and Renaud. The Firm started with two lawyers and now boasts 46. At first it was a general service firm with a local client base; now, while the Firm’s practice largely remains in Arizona, it has a national and international focus in litigation and legal problem-solving.

The Firm’s practice has changed to serve the needs of its large local, national, and international clients. While the Firm phased out its criminal and domestic relations practices which didn’t serve the needs of its growing client base, the Firm has expanded its administrative regulation practice because its clients expressed a need for greater representation in that area.

The Firm’s focus on serving the needs of its client base and changing with clients’ evolving needs has allowed the Firm to succeed even



RCDM Shareholders from left to right: Jack A. Klecan, William W. Drury, Carol M. Romano, James L. Blair, Denise J. Wachholz, William S. Sowders, Steven G. Mesaros, David McDowell, Margaret T. McCarthy, Mark E. Gove, Tamara N. Cook, Scott Conlon, Charles A. Struble, Michael D. Wolver

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during tough economic times. Even during the recent economic slowdown of the last three years, the Firm has hired more than a dozen lawyers and is contemplating adding more.

“But despite our growth, we strive to maintain the small firm atmosphere the Firm had when we were only six attorneys,” said Mesaros. “Certainly we could have rapidly expanded to 50 or 75 lawyers; the work was here, but we didn’t want to grow just for the sake of growth.”

“The Firm’s atmosphere is important to everyone here,” said McDowell, “This is one of the reasons for our controlled growth.”

“Maintaining the culture of the Firm and the level of quality and commitment our clients have come to expect is important to us,” said McDowell.

Having a legal advocate with a large pool of experience to draw from and the cooperation among attorneys one typically sees in a small firm is a huge advantage to our clients, he also said. It means there is a lot of collaboration between lawyers in the way problems are solved and questions are answered. “A client can benefit from the dozens of years or more of knowledge among our attorneys, the experience of well-seasoned trial lawyers, and the ideas of attorneys from other states, different backgrounds, and other practice experiences.” The firm strives to maintain that small firm collaborative approach despite its size.

“Even at our size, interactions are still similar to when there were only six of us, if we want to discuss a case, we just drop into someone’s office,” said Mesaros, “but when we want more attorneys involved we have to set a time and date to get everyone together. But the focus on that collegiality and cooperation remains.” “A Firm is more than just its attorneys,” adds McDowell. “Every person here, including our paralegals, legal assistants, and staff, contributes to the Firm’s success. Since the Firm’s leaders recognize that every person



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Jack Klecan and Bill Drury

has an important job, the Firm’s leaders take pride in treating the staff well. So well, that several of the support staff have been there 20 years or more.”

“It is not uncommon for lawyers to be with a firm for an entire career, but that is not necessarily the case with staff members” Mesaros said. Mesaros joined

William W. Drury and John A. Klecan are the most senior trial attorneys at the Firm. Drury has tried more than 100 cases to a jury and has a proven track record of defense verdicts. Klecan, practicing since 1974, has tried more than 250 cases to a jury and likewise, has a proven track record of defense verdicts. The two are qualified to handle trials in any of the Firm’s practice areas, including cases involving product liability, medical malpractice, employment, insurance, transportation, and catastrophic personal injury.

In one of Drury’s most notable cases, he won a defense verdict for TASER International in Maricopa County Superior Court in 2005. This was the first product liability action against TASER to be tried and was broadcast on Court TV Extra as well as drawing extensive print media attention. After a four-week trial, the jury deliberated for three hours and found for TASER nine to one.

“Fewer and fewer cases go to trial as mediation and arbitration have become a more common means of resolving cases,” Mesaros said. “So it’s rare for a Firm to have seasoned trial attorneys, as we do, who have handled more than 100 trials.”

Since clients still want experienced trial attorneys, the Firm is working on ways of developing those skills in younger attorneys, said Mesaros. “We have such a wealth of knowledge and skill in Bill, Jack and Gordon and a younger generation of lawyers who want to develop those skills, the rub is finding a way to transfer those skills when there are less and less cases going to trial each year,” he said.

the Firm in 1983 as its seventh attorney. Other attorneys who joined before Mesaros and remain with the Firm are named shareholders William Drury who joined in 1979 and Gordon Cook, now of counsel, who has been with the firm since the 1950s. The Firm also has a host of staff members who have been with the Firm for 15 years or more.

There's an annual staff appreciation week at Renaud Cook Drury Mesaros that includes breakfast, massages, and gifts for the staff. At year-end there are annual bonuses, but

in years of significant economic success the shareholders give the staff an additional bonus which reflects their contribution to the Firm's success.

Another way the Firm unites is its social interaction outside of the office including its softball team, made up of 15 to 20 players who compete in a local lawyers' league. It's a co-ed team comprised of members of the Firm, including spouses and family members. "We're not very good but we do have fun," said McDowell, "and it's the talk of the office



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C. Cole Crabtree

As a longstanding member of the Phoenix legal field, the Firm encourages its lawyers to become involved in the community and develop their own connections and clients, McDowell said; this is something that's not always encouraged in other law firms, particularly with the youngest associates.

"Our goal is for our associates to someday be equity shareholders," Mesaros said. "We want them to go out there and make a name for themselves."

The Firm's associates are involved in the bar's Young Lawyers Division as well as specific sections of the bar and other organizations, both local and national. Most recently, Renaud Cook Drury Mesaros sponsored the Black Board of Directors leadership breakfast and was a sponsor of the Arizona Asian American Bar Association scholarship award and installation banquet. The Firm's lawyers participate in various sections of the State Bar such as the Arizona Civil Jury Instructions Committee, Minority and Women in Law Committee, and the Construction Law Section.

The Women of Renaud Cook, "W.O.R.C.," is the recently developed women's initiative program at the Firm. The mission of W.O.R.C. is to enhance the careers of the women attorneys by sharing knowledge, cultivating leadership, and gaining insight on networking techniques that work for women attorneys. In years past, RCDM has also supported the Phoenix Business & Professional Women functions including the "Moving Women Forward" Expo and the "Social Media Symposium" held during National Business Women's week in October.

The Firm as a whole contributes to the community through its personal interactions, volunteer work, and donations. The Firm contributes to a scholarship fund at the ASU Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law each year and raises funds for the University of Arizona Cancer Center. Aside from the contributions of the Firm as a whole, its attorneys volunteer in their communities and participate in civic organizations including the Fiesta Bowl Committee, Youth & Families First, Banner Thunderdogs Program, Surprise Youth League, and Tempe Diablos.

"Our attorneys are involved in civic and church organizations throughout the state, serve on school boards, are adjunct professors at community colleges, and belong to local chapters of various alumni associations, said Marketing Director Gretchen Crates. The Firm encourages participation in the community and not necessarily as a marketing tool but to keep its attorneys well-rounded and connected with the community, said Crates.

"The Firm has long been a part of Arizona and we encourage our attorneys to give back to the state and community they call home," said McDowell.



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Shareholders: Carol M. Romano, Tamara N. Cook, Margaret T. McCarthy, Denise J. Wachholz

Aside from drawing on the skills of lawyers in the Firm, Renaud Cook Drury Mesaros also has strong relationships with outstanding attorneys throughout the country. The Firm is a founding member of ALFA International, a network of independently owned law firms. Founded in 1980, ALFA International has a worldwide membership including 135 law firms, with 85 member firms in the United States.

The Firm's membership in ALFA has been a great resource for exchanging legal research and expert referrals, choosing counsel in other cities, and handling local litigation projects for ALFA clients. Through ALFA, the Firm has the ability to call on the expertise of several thousand lawyers which provides a significant cost savings and tactical advantage to Firm clients. ALFA International clients have access to a wide range of professional and educational resources produced by member firms, including on-site seminars, tele-seminars, a speakers bureau, and countless reference publications. RCDM attorneys actively participate on the Steering Committees for several practice groups by helping with the programming of ALFA functions throughout the year.

ALFA has practice groups in Business Litigation, Commercial Transportation, Employment, Insurance and Coverage, Construction, Medical Devices, Medical Malpractice, Product Liability, Professional Liability, Retail Real Estate, Toxic Torts, and Intellectual Property & Technology. It is exploring the formation of an additional practice group in Hospitality law.

during the season.”

“And our win/loss record shows that it doesn't affect our hiring practices,” joked Mesaros. “We don't try to find out what your ERA is before we hire you.”

While the Firm prides itself on achieving optimal results for its clients, it also allows the employees to have an environment that is first-class. Renaud Cook Drury Mesaros, PA offers a balance between work and personal life that is unmatched. The reality is that being able to put in a full productive day at work, go home, tuck in your kids at night and spend quality time with your significant other is achievable. It is not only recognized by management, but strongly encouraged. They want their employees to enjoy a standard of life that is sought out by many in the workplace.

At a Glance

Renaud Cook Drury Mesaros has a strong and diversified client base that includes: Fortune 500 companies, national and international insurers, public and closely held companies, and private individuals.

In response to the varied needs of clients, attorneys offer a range of legal services in litigation and risk management.

Our practice areas

- Accident and Personal Injury
- Administrative Law
- Commercial and Business Litigation
- Commercial and Real Estate Transactions
- Construction Litigation
- Employment Law and Litigation
- Insurance Coverage and Bad Faith
- Medical Malpractice and Healthcare
- Products Liability
- Professional Liability
- Transportation

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