Minute with a Member

Stephen A. Ryan

Stephen A. Ryan chairs the birth and catastrophic injury litigation and the medical device and pharmaceutical liability practice groups at Marshall Dennehey Warner Coleman & Goggin, King of Prussia. He has been a member of the PBA for 40 years.

Where did you attend law school?
I attended Villanova Law School. I was accepted off the waiting list two weeks before classes started and on the same day my son was born.

What would people be surprised to know about you?
I have performed on the stage of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Also, I survived a high forceps delivery, and, ironically, am now chair of our firm’s birth and catastrophic injury litigation practice group.

What’s on your desk right now?
PaRCP, F.R.C.P.; box of oversized tissues (hate small ones), antique inkwell set (a gift from my parents upon law graduation) and various memorabilia, referred to by our younger lawyers as “flair.”

What’s your media mix?
60s R&B, 60s girl groups, Summer of Love hits, Louis Prima, Spyrogyra, Dr. Dog, Maxwell’s Urban Hang Suite, John Mayer, John Coltrane, Miles Davis.

When you’re not working, what do you do?
Play tenor and baritone sax in classic rock band “Class Action,” cook (ethnic foods — sushi, Moroccan tagines, paella), tell really corny jokes to my grandchildren. My wife and I also try to take a Viking River Cruise abroad each year.

What’s your favorite book and why?
Pulitzer Prize winner Robert Caro’s *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* because it is massive and fascinating and is chock full of the history of New York, where I grew up.

Who is your hero and why?
Sen. Everett Dirksen, who helped write and pass The Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968 and was a powerful orator.

When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?
Initially, a pioneer like Davey Crockett, then a bus driver like Ralph Cramden, then a jazz musician, until I realized I didn’t have the chops to make it. My dad, a NYPD cop who worked a second job on the docks in Brooklyn to send me to the best high school on Long Island, asked me to join the debating club because, “We can’t shut you up, so we might as well put it to good use.” That led to a deep interest in the law and jurisprudence in high school, which persists to this day.

State of the First Amendment

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that the baker in the case should not be legally obligated to create a cake for a gay wedding, while 42 percent thought that the baker should be.

Staudenmaier said, “It will be interesting to find out what these local students think about these contemporary First Amendment issues. This is a unique opportunity for everyone involved.”

PBA members are invited to attend the program. Seating will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Any member interested in receiving an invitation to attend should send an email including his/her name, preferred email address, phone number and the requested number of tickets to communications@pabar.org. Deadline to RSVP is Sept. 7.