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# Life Lessons Learned Along the Way: Great Assistants Clear the Field so You Can Be the Best You Can Be

By Harvey R. Heller

I have used this space to tell stories about who I am and to introduce you to our group. My stories aren't about me, but about those who have had a profound impact on me. This month's installment is about Pam.

Recently, 14 lawyers in our firm were recognized for inclusion in the 2015 edition of *Best Lawyers in America*®. I have been lucky enough to have been so recognized for a number of years. This year, I was honored to be additionally recognized as "Detroit Lawyer of the Year" for insurance law or, as I joked to my dog-loving friends: "Best in Show!" Three other members of our Defense and Insurance Coverage Practice Group were also recognized: Julie Mayer, Kate Klaus and Steve Wolock.

The reality, however, is that nobody here works alone, especially me. The remaining members of our team: Rick Mitchell, David Saperstein, Tom Werner, Jesse Roth, Leanne Tarasiewicz and our support staff round out the wheels on this bus.

The engine of this operation, however, is my wonderful Administrative Assistant for the last 28 years, Pam MacLennan. Whenever I am with colleagues and we discuss our assistants, nobody that I have conversed with is able to equal Pam's sheer longevity. Rightfully, they marvel that someone could put up with me this long, other than my dear wife who I suspect "did it for the sake of the kids!"

Pam is my "go to". She makes sure that each and every detail from the opening of a matter to its conclusion is attended to. This includes so many details that I sometimes wonder if I'm needed! She is by far, the most organized person I know, which is the exact opposite of yours truly. I am truly lucky to be able to work with her on a daily basis. She frees up my time, so that I can be a lawyer and service our clients.

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As I write this, I wonder if all of us who are lucky enough to have assistants in our respective businesses understand their true value. We spend our lives in a chosen field and, hopefully, develop some unique abilities along the way. Those abilities are honed through many hours of focused work. Someone, not I, noted that if you spend 10,000 hours doing something, an expertise or unique ability will develop. While I agree with this in the macro sense, I wonder what my professional life would be like if I was not able to set aside those hours to sharpen whatever skills I possess. That is the unique ability of a great assistant: *clearing the field so you can concentrate on trying to be the best you can be.*

So, as we sing the praises of achievement as these annual accolades appear, I felt it appropriate to express my gratitude to the Best Administrative Assistant in America: Pam!

***Our second article this month*** comes from Julie Mayer, our insurance coverage “guru”. Julie and I have worked together for nearly 30 years. I am sure, like my wife, she has only put up with me for the sake of her six wonderful daughters! She is a first-time Best Lawyer this year and we feature her introduction to “other insurance” clauses.

As always, I hope this is meaningful to you and welcome your comments.