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THE RUDMAN LAW FIRM

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## Remembering dad

A LOOK AT THE LAWYER DADS WHOSE EXAMPLES INSPIRED SONS AND DAUGHTERS TO JOIN OUR PROFESSION

This month we celebrate Father's Day – a day on which we recognize our dads and how they have inspired us. I am particularly fortunate in that I am very close to my father, **Barry Rudman**. You may have seen us together at CAALA functions as we often attend together. The fact that I ultimately chose the same profession as he did, and went to his alma mater, Loyola Law School, only served to strengthen our bond.

Growing up, I was enamored by the stories he would tell about interesting clients, witnesses he deposed, and how he dealt with obstreperous defense counsel, all on individual journeys to right a wrong and make a difference in the life of an injured client. I have vivid memories, when I was in high school, of my dad bringing home transcripts for me to read of witnesses he deposed in some of his cases. I always found it fascinating how he would be able to expose a person who was distorting the truth and box them into a corner until the real story would ultimately come out. I felt a certain adrenaline rush when reading it, which I only recaptured many years later when I found I was able to do the same.

When I was in law school, my father hired me to work at his firm as a law clerk, and ultimately gave me my first job as an attorney after I passed the bar. He mentored me during the first five years of my career and taught me all the fundamentals of litigation, the importance of being civil with opposing counsel and respectful of the court and the profession. He trusted me, having little to no experience, with every aspect of the practice from deciding on which cases to take, to taking key depositions, to arguing law and motion, and even trying cases before a jury.

Working alongside him, I was exposed to other aspects of his legal acumen, from his uncanny ability to find

supporting caselaw through research (before the regular use of online research tools), his brilliant and analytical mind, and his talent at persuasive writing. It was incredible, at 25 years old, to suddenly know my father on an entirely different level. He introduced me to CAALA and gave me all the tools and opportunity I would need in pursuing a legal career. He is now of counsel to my firm.

As Father's Day approaches, and I think about how grateful I am for the inspiration my father has provided to me in my career, I cannot help but think of other CAALA members whose lawyer dads may have made an impact on their lives. So, I reached out to friends and colleagues for some insight into the impressions their legal dads made upon their lives and careers.

### Steve and David Glickman

CAALA's 2006 President, Steven Glickman, tells the story of his father, David Glickman, CAALA Emeritus Board Member, Trial Lawyer of the Year (1977), and Hall of Fame Inductee (2010), and his role in Steve's wanting to be a trial lawyer since his earliest days. "My mother got pregnant when my father was in his third year at UCLA law school, so while still unborn, he read cases to me. Then, in my first few months of life, he held me while he studied for the bar exam. . . .

Growing up, my father was in trial a lot more than we all are today – he tried over 300 civil jury trials, a feat likely to never be repeated. While in high school and college, I would go watch his trials on summer break. Aside from working as a bus boy for a catering company and a box boy, all my other jobs have been law related: first with my father's investigator, then as a law clerk, then as a lawyer. Before all this, though, my father started our local Indian Guides tribe where the motto is 'Fathers and sons, pals

forever.' In our case, this has been true from even before I was born!"

### Brian and Howard Panish

Brian Panish, whose many honors including CAALA's Trial Lawyer of the Year (1999), reminisces about his father, Howard Panish. "I was very blessed to have a father as a trial lawyer. As a child I watched my father working late and leaving early. My memories were of him always being in trial. He claims to have tried over 500 jury trials as trials were much different many years ago as they would try cases over \$500 . . . I watched him with his friends always telling stories about trials and was impressed by their jobs trying cases and how much fun they had doing it. As a young lawyer, I was feeling pretty impressed with myself having won a string of defense verdicts. I was bragging how I had not lost a trial and was undefeated. He said, 'Let me tell you something. A lawyer who brags he hasn't lost a trial hasn't tried very many.' He inspired me to love trying cases, to always put your client first and stay humble. Most importantly, he stressed how much practice and work it took to become a good trial lawyer. He was inspirational as all my brothers became lawyers and I now have two daughters in the profession."

### Gary, Dylan, Michelle and Taylor Dordick

Dylan, Michelle, and Taylor Dordick, children of Emeritus Board Member, and CAALA Trial Lawyer of the Year (2001), Gary Dordick, were all inspired to go into law by their father, although none felt any pressure from him to do so. Dylan explains, "He just led by example. He made what he did look so interesting and you could tell that he genuinely loved being a trial lawyer. All his close friends

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were trial lawyers. . . and we saw firsthand how tight knit the Plaintiff's community was and how much all of them enjoyed what they did as well. He led the horses to water and knew that we would drink once we saw how rewarding it would be."

Jennifer remembers that every case her father brought home "was more painful than the one before. I was afraid to stand too close to the edge of the sidewalk after my dad's new client was brain damaged from a city bus that ran over the curb and hit her. . . . I learned to avoid being the first car in the intersection when the light turns green because of how many people and buses run red lights. The list goes on." She explains, "Having a lawyer parent inspired me to pursue higher education. . . . Becoming a lawyer, specifically, was more of a personal choice. I practice family law, an area that is far away from the scary and sad tales of personal injury."

Taylor also recalls all the stories she would hear from her dad about the cases he had. ". . . I knew I wanted to help people the same way he does. . . . I've watched my dad in trial for as long as I can remember and was always so inspired. I always tried to emulate him in everything I do but at the same time he would always encourage me to find my own style and to look for other female mentors to be a powerful female attorney. . . . Any chance I get, I love watching him in trial and hearing his thoughts on cases is incredible. He's the smartest guy I know."

### **Louanne and Edward Masry**

CAALA Board Member, Louanne Masry, remembers her father, attorney Edward Masry, first and foremost as a great dad, which was the most important part of his life. Louanne shares, "Although he became 'famous' from a 2000 movie about a toxic tort case (Erin Brokovitch), my dad's career for the forty years prior to that was primarily focused on righting wrongs.

My dad was an absolute believer in human and civil rights for all, and he took many personal risks representing

people and entities in the 1960s and 70's whose causes were not understood in those decades. He made sure that his children knew of those wrongs and were not afraid to speak up, and that is probably what has inspired me the most, as both a person and as a lawyer." She recalls, "Every time I walked out of the office for a trial or hearing, my dad would say: 'Go get 'em kid.' I still remember those words as if it were yesterday."

### **Gretchen and Jim Nelson**

CAALA Emeritus Board Member, Gretchen Nelson, looks upon her father, Jim Nelson, who practiced law until his retirement at age 93, with great admiration. When WWII started, Jim enlisted in the Navy and became a pilot, flying jets off air carriers for the next 25 years before he retired in protest against the Vietnam war. Gretchen remembers, "He took me to march on the White House protesting that war and I will never forget putting candles on the fencing around the White House in honor of the sons of many of his pals who had died in that war.

Jim Nelson was accepted to Georgetown Law when Gretchen was in high school in 1972. "And then because no one would hire a 49-year-old lawyer with no experience in a law firm, he took on a case that was posted on the board at Georgetown." That case was representing Charlie Jackson, an African American with a Masters Degree in Agriculture, who went to work for the Department, and in nearly 25 years had never been given a raise while all his white colleagues were promoted. Gretchen remembers, "No one would take on his case, except my dad who was incensed when he read what the Department had done to Charlie for so many years. . . . After four years of fighting as many battles as you could imagine . . . the case went to trial, in 1977. . . . After a very contentious and difficult trial, Dad received a verdict in Charlie's favor, with a promotion, and back pay for near 25 years for Charlie." Gretchen conveys about her dad, "I have always hoped and prayed that I can live

up to his ethics, his belief in all mankind, and his tenacity in the face of adversity."

### **James and Robert M. Fox**

James Fox has the privilege of practicing law with his father, Robert M. Fox, CAALA President (1971). Robert is now 95 and still an active member of the bar, and handles intakes of new clients for the firm. James proudly relays, "We have practiced law together for 40 years. Never a cross word. In his 70s he became my second chair and we won a bunch of big Med Mal verdicts together." James remembers, "On the way to court, as a teenager, I sat next to him on the 101 freeway heading to 111 North Hill [Street] in the Lincoln Continental. He'd hand me a legal pad and he'd dictate notes for cross examination, closing, whatever. . . . Lunch was always the 9th floor cafeteria with the glistening Jello desserts and meatloaf entrees. He always introduced me to defense counsel and he always had great respect for opposing counsel and the judges. So, I learned the important stuff from him."

### **John and Myron Blumberg**

CAALA Emeritus Board Member, John Blumberg, remembers his late father, Myron Blumberg as his first mentor. "As a new lawyer, I used to sit across from his desk and wonder how I would ever remember all of the things he was teaching me. He was a trial lawyer who had a passion for justice and a commitment to civil rights. I learned by his example about justice, equality, ethics and morality." John recounts, "He told me that we seldom learn from our triumphs; it is our losses that teach us. But the advice that has driven me and haunted me to this day is that you must approach every case as winnable. Sometimes a loss means that you didn't find the thing that would have made the difference."

### **Aimee and Steve Kirby**

CAALA Board Member, Aimee Kirby, who worked for a number of years with

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both her lawyer parents, Steve and Peggy Kirby, tells, "What my father did instill in me was my work ethic and a strong belief that the only barrier to my success was my imagination. I never felt like I had limits as a female in the pursuit of law." Aimee appreciates, "He pushed me to excel and created someone that understood the need to give back and mentor those that come after you to have an equal chance at the table." Feeling that both her parents have contributed to the lawyer she is today, she states, "I like to say the grit comes from my dad and the heart, my mother."

#### **Karina and Lawrence Lallande**

CAALA Board Member, Karina Lallande, also practices with her father, CAALA Emeritus Board Member, Lawrence Lallande. Karina remembers, "Growing up, I watched my dad as he worked long hours at the office, spent weeks away from home while he was in trial . . . , and gave every ounce of his energy to the clients that depended on him. . . . Despite all the time and energy that he dedicated to his work, he always managed to be there for his family." Karina further relates, ". . . during the

decade that I have worked side by side with my dad, he has never dismissed me because of my youth or gender. He has continued to teach me, to inspire me to work hard and to help others, and to motivate me to rise to challenges personally and professionally. A lot of kids grow up idolizing their dad and wanting to be like him. That's what happened to me. I just didn't realize it until I was grown."

#### **Oscar Renee and Oscar H. Gutierrez**

Finally, newly appointed CAALA Board Member Oscar Renee Gutierrez looks at his law dad, Oscar H. Gutierrez, with great respect, telling that he "has always been my biggest inspiration and hero. As a young boy, I was amazed at how he could change the fortunes of individuals and entire families with his legal representation. The vast majority of his clients were blue-collar monolingual Spanish-speakers who needed to be healthy and injury-free in order to work and carry out their job duties.

These injured clients, who often were the sole providers for their families, feared for their future post-injury and did not know how to navigate the legal

waters in a new country. These injured clients put their complete trust in my father; he always considered this an honor and he took that responsibility seriously."

Oscar Renee, who is now living his dream of working alongside his dad, learned valuable life lessons. "As I grew older, I began to have a greater appreciation for his incredible work ethic, drive to succeed, and his refusal to fail. I learned that in order to be successful, there is absolutely no substitute for preparation and hard work. To give less than your absolute best was a waste. These are lessons that I implement in my daily life and will teach my son, Roman."

#### **I am in good company**

I thoroughly enjoyed this exercise, learning that I am in good company in appreciating my lawyer dad. I can see the impact he has had on my career and the way I practice law today. I wish all the dads out there a very Happy Father's Day. I hope you will all spend some time this month thinking about how the dads in your life have inspired you.

