

Benjamin Rosenberg

When Benjamin Rosenberg became a law clerk with Venable, Baetjer & Howard LLP in the summer of '68, he never dreamed he one day would lead a firm with a clientele that includes many of Baltimore's elite institutions, business-people and nonprofits.

As destiny had it, he made a splash when he left Venable almost two decades later to found Rosenberg, Proutt, Funk & Greenberg LLP (now Rosenberg, Martin, Funk & Greenberg LLP) and soon established relations with the iconic Mercantile Bankshares Corp. — which remains the firm's most significant account.

Rosenberg started working at Venable before graduating from the University of Maryland School of Law. After working his way up to partner in 1977, he stayed 10 more years before co-founding the firm with colleagues Bob Proutt and Gene Funk.

When he says, "We were proven wrong in that we did not think we would have so many high-profile clients," it sounds like an understatement. Past and present clients include the likes of the Johns Hopkins University, Hale Development, Canton Crossing and the Harry & Jeannette Weinberg Foundation.

While the firm has done "all kinds of civil litigation, which is often business-related," Rosenberg pointed out that his subspecialty became appellate litigation about 10 years ago. That role, he said, comes with time, "not to someone about 10 years out of law school."

But something "every lawyer can do at any age," said Rosenberg, is community service. He has volunteered with Our Daily Bread and served on the boards of the Walters Art Gallery, the Bryn Mawr School and the Associated: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore.

"You are never going to amount to

anything as a lawyer if all you do is put in your time at work and go home," he said. "I don't care if it's community, educational or religious service, but you have got to give back. It's an obligation and part of being a well-rounded, well-grounded person."

Another way Rosenberg gives back is mentoring. He offered that the way he started his firm is a perfect example.

"I was the only one who knew how a law office ran and how to manage clients," he said. During the past several years, his firm has hosted law clerks from the University of Maryland and University of Baltimore law schools.

Also, from the time the firm was founded, it has been involved in the Maryland State Bar Association's Law Links program.

"They send us an inner-city high school student, and we have them sit in on depositions and go to court hearings," he said. "We've been doing that for at least 10 years."

When reflecting on his career, Rosenberg should feel a great sense of satisfaction, especially if he wants to keep score: "We started with me and three younger guys (including Proutt and Funk, both of whom are now with other concerns), and this firm has grown to eight times its initial size in a market that has seen a lot of contraction."

While his firm has grown, Rosenberg is doing likewise. He handled his first first-degree murder case last year and last summer got a surprise call from Paul Carlin, executive director of the MSBA.

The Maryland Court of Appeals had asked MSBA to file an *amicus* brief, which Rosenberg did gratis. It marked the first time in a decade that such a document had been requested. The case became moot, but "it offered the opportunity to influence the law



PROFILE

Name: Benjamin Rosenberg

Organization: Rosenberg, Martin, Funk & Greenberg LLP

Law school: University of Maryland School of Law

Region: Central

County: Baltimore City

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in a positive that way you can only get by becoming a lawyer," he said.

"I think being a lawyer is about the best job anybody could have. It's always something new; it's always a challenge, and once in a while you get to do something that is really good for the community," Rosenberg said.

— By Mark R. Smith

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