



## Lifelong friends, classmates and fraternity brothers mark 20 years as law partners

By: Anamika Roy Daily Record Legal Affairs Writer November 15, 2017



'I don't know that you'll find anyone that has a friendship like this but are also law partners,' Ben Rosenberg, right, founder of Rosenberg Martin Greenberg LLP in Baltimore, said of his 60-year friendship with Stanley Fine. (Maximilian Franz/The Daily Record)

Ever since they met during a ping pong game after school in Baltimore in the fall of 1956, Stanley Fine and Ben Rosenberg have been best friends. They have been through grade school, college, law school and service in the United States Coast Guard Reserve together. This month, the duo is celebrating 20 years as law partners.

"I don't know that you'll find anyone that has a friendship like this but are also law partners," said Rosenberg, founder and chairman of Rosenberg Martin Greenberg LLP in Baltimore.

The duo can recite exact dates that make up the entire timeline of their friendship and frequently brag about the other's accomplishments and accolades.

Rosenberg started his firm 30 years ago after nearly two decades at Venable LLP. In 1997, he was having lunch with Fine, who was a land-use attorney at Kaplan, Heyman, Greenberg, Engelman & Belgrad P.A. in Baltimore at the time. Rosenberg came home and told his wife that he had an idea: he wanted to bring his old friend on board at his firm.

"She said, 'What took you so long?'" Rosenberg recalled.

These days, Fine, a partner in Rosenberg Martin's real estate practice, and Rosenberg have offices just a few doors away from each other. They see each other about three or four times a day (at least that's what they admit) and go home to the same part of Baltimore, where they live two blocks apart in Canton.

Rosenberg acknowledged a law partnership is a business relationship and "you don't have to love everybody in the firm." But that's not how Rosenberg and Fine operate.

"People here think we're connected at the hip," Fine said.

### Basic training

They would not be wrong. By Fine and Rosenberg's estimation, the furthest they have been apart geographically was when Fine was working in Annapolis from 1971 to 1972 for Gov. Marvin Mandel and Rosenberg was at Venable in downtown Baltimore.

"We've had the extraordinary pleasure of being able to practice law with each other and still hang out like we're 12 years old," Rosenberg said.

The duo still jokes about who's older (Fine, by 10 months) and who's taller (Rosenberg). November is one of the two months out of the year when they're the same age, 73.

Fine and Rosenberg attended Baltimore City College and went on to attend The Johns Hopkins University, where they were in the same fraternity.

"By that time we were really, really, good friends," Rosenberg said.

While Rosenberg was a year younger, he finished his degree in three years and graduated with Fine. The two enrolled at University of Maryland's law school in the fall of 1966. The following January, the peak of the Vietnam War, Fine and Rosenberg joined the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve together and went to Cape May, New Jersey for basic training.

"You're dropped in an environment you've never been in before," Rosenberg said.

Fine and Rosenberg lived in close quarters on a ship with men far younger and less educated than the two aspiring attorneys. The pair still remembers their time in the Coast Guard vividly, and even have a photo from that time framed at the law firm.

"It was a great learning experience," Fine said.

### 'Icing on the cake'

The friends went back to law school and graduated in January 1969. Rosenberg went to work at Venable while Fine became an assistant state's attorney. Not surprisingly, the young attorneys were roommates living near Hopkins.

Their friendship has provided advantages in their jobs over the years. Rosenberg, for example, drops his friend's name in Baltimore matters all the time, given Fine's involvement in city land-use cases for decades.

"All I have to say is, 'Stanley Fine is my law partner,' and doors open," Rosenberg said.

When Fine has a client who needs assistance in a litigation matter, he refers them to Rosenberg.

"I have an assurance that it's going to be handled," Fine said.

The duo say they never get sick of each other, and possible conflicts of mixing their business and personal relationships was never an issue.

"I've never even thought about it," Fine said. "I've grown more at this firm than I have anywhere else. And to work with Ben every day is icing on the cake."

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Stanley Fine holds a photo of him and Ben Rosenberg, right, during their time in the Coast Guard more than 50 years ago. (Maximilian Franz/The Daily Record)