ILLINOIS STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

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# Trusts & Estates

The newsletter of the Illinois State Bar Association's Section on Trusts & Estates

## Spotlight on Trusts & Estates Section Council Members: Raymond Prather & Kathryn Van Eeuwen

BY MIA O. HERNANDEZ

The Trusts & Estates Section Council has members from throughout the State of Illinois with a variety of professional achievements, skills, and practices. In this newsletter, we continue a monthly series of articles in a question and answer format that highlights the backgrounds, interests, and experiences of the members of the Trusts & Estates Section Council as a way to get to know more about them.

### Raymond Prather

**Prather Ebner LLP, Chicago, Illinois**

**Q**: What got you into the Trusts and Estates practice?

**A**: *I interned with Lambda Legal while they were litigating the Iowa marriage case. During my time there, the legal impact of marriage really hit home. When I opened my firm, the idea of using the law in creative ways to help clients who couldn't marry to provide for their partners intrigued me. I had a background in accounting, and estate planning fit with my skills.*

**Q**: What is your favorite part of the practice?

**A**: *My favorite part of the practice is the people I meet. I enjoy learning about my clients and hearing about what is important to them. The trusts and estates bar is very collegial. When opening our law firm, I met numerous attorneys who gave me their time and provided helpful advice. Through my activities in bar associations, including the ISBA, I have become friends with other trusts and estates attorneys throughout the state and nation.*

**Q**: What is the most challenging part of the practice?

**A**: *The most challenging part of the practice is time management–balancing the administrative duties of running a law firm, marketing, and doing the work for clients.*

**Q**: What is the most interesting part of the practice?

**A**: *The most interesting part of the practice to me is the accounting issues. I have a certificate in financial forensics. When I represent beneficiaries of trusts, I like following the money to ensure trustees are spending funds correctly. When I represent trustees, I like finding ways to present the information in the accounting as clearly as possible to resolve issues quickly and minimize potential liability.*

**Q**: What do you like to do when you are not administering trusts/estates?

**A**: *I enjoy cooking. My husband and I host dinner parties frequently. I also enjoy working out; I've been a runner since 5th grade.*

### Kathryn Van Eeuwen

**ATG Trust Company, Chicago, Illinois**

**Q**:What got you into the Trusts and Estates practice?

**A**: *I stumbled into the world of corporate fiduciaries quite by accident. After a brief* *stint with an insurance defense firm following graduation from law school, I joined a bank management trainee program. One of the rotations in the program led me to the personal trust department. It just so happened about a month in, a trust officer resigned. I was offered the job based upon my legal education even though I had no trust or investment experience of any kind. I'm in the 26th year of my career, and I've never considered doing anything else.*

**Q**: What is your favorite part of the practice?

**A**: *The part of my job I like best is that no two days are the same. Every estate plan is as different as the individuals for whom they are created. Even though I often say there isn't much I*

*haven't seen during my career, I find that every day, there is always something new to learn.*

**Q**: What is the most challenging part of the practice?

**A**: *I would say the most challenging part of being a corporate fiduciary is the same as what I like most about being a corporate trustee: that every day is different. There is no standard client or client circumstances. Each is unique. While that does help to keep my interest, it also can be exhausting. We must adapt to each client's unique circumstance and supply information and guidance to better help them and their goals when it's requested. There truly isn't a standard case when it comes to serving as a corporate fiduciary.*

**Q**: What is the most interesting part of the practice?

**A**: *I find the variety of client personalities to be the most interesting part of my job. Throughout my career I've handled relationships for the very wealthy to those trying to make ends meet on a very modest wasting trust. I've worked with noted scholars, CEOs and starving artists. Each has a unique personality. I find it fascinating to get to know them and what makes them tick because that way we can take better care of them and their individual needs.*

**Q**: What do you like to do when you are not administering trusts/estates?

**A**: *Away from work, I enjoy spending time with my husband and two teenage sons. We love traveling and exploring local restaurants and new cuisines in whatever area we visit. Hiking, snorkeling, and rock climbing are three of our favorite past times. Although, we are not able to do them as often as we would like. Recently, with the inability to travel, long walks in our local prairie preserve in Naperville, putting together jigsaw puzzles and mottling through the New York Times crossword puzzles have had to suffice. Outside of spending time with my family, I enjoy volunteering, most recently for DuPagePads in its mission to end homelessness.*

Please stay tuned for the next issue when we will feature additional members of the Trusts & Estates Section Council.■

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