

What is your legacy?

This article appeared in the Palm Beach County Bar Bulletin in September of 2000 when Scott was President of the Palm Beach County Bar.

When Scott was running for The Florida Bar Board of Governors, he received a call from United States Immigration Court Judge Phillip J. Montante, Jr. (New York).

The Judge, who Scott has never met, moved from Palm Beach County several years earlier and was still a member of The Florida Bar. He had read that Scott was running for the Board of Governors and called to wish him well and to advise that he gives a copy of Scott's "legacy" article to every lawyer who appears in his courtroom, and he urges them to read it.

In Scott's article he asks: "will your actions today elevate or denigrate the esteem in which our profession is held?" The answer for Scott came in that phone call from Judge Montante.

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**President's Message by Scott G. Hawkins
(September 2000)**

Our tendency in this culture of modern America is to focus on the "here and now." As busy lawyers, we occupy our minds and energies with those demands that are most pressing, most urgent. Our everyday actions and thoughts are dictated by the force of expediency.

The problem with this approach to living (and practicing) is that it detracts from the perspective that one's actions create one's legacy. If your actions are dictated by the urgent, that pattern of behavior will form your legacy - like it or not.

To create a legacy is to leave in others, including children, families, law firms, colleagues, organizations, and those you influence, the contributions of one's core values and spirit. A senior partner may leave a legacy of integrity. A mother may leave a legacy of caring. A father may leave a legacy of "family first" in all things.

All of us will leave a legacy as the result of our actions and words. Some will regret the legacy they leave by demonstrating little concern for others and little commitment to core values and institutions. Others will leave behind legacies rich with demonstrations of commitment to enduring values and principles.

There is no question that what you do in the present will influence in the future the persons and institutions you serve. The future of our bench is influenced by the judges of today. The future of our law firms is influenced by the actions of today's partners and how they respond to today's challenges. The future of the Bar and our profession will be influenced by our actions as lawyers today. Will your actions today elevate or denigrate the esteem in which our profession is held?

Obviously, it is your choice what legacy you choose to leave behind. Make no mistake, all of us will leave one. Think today about your actions in the context of what others will think tomorrow of your legacy.

Measure your actions today against the legacy you will leave tomorrow.