

**The De-LAP ZONE:  
The Delaware Lawyers Assistance Program**

**By: Carol P. Waldhauser**

**Ten Principles For Success**

It was a cold, blistery afternoon as I knocked on the door of a sole-practitioner's law office. This anticipated meeting being the direct result of an attorney's call to De-LAP regarding issues on retirement. As the door opened, I was greeted with a warm smile from a vivacious 80-year-old man. John Doe, Esquire was his name.

Mr. Doe invited me to have a seat in his small; but toasty and bright two-room office. Immediately as we began to chat, it dawned on me that on this December afternoon I was about to embark on a compelling, as well as a compassionate, account of a successful man and lawyer. I realized too that Mr. Doe was an individual who could teach us all about coping with life, while maintaining a successful law practice, and aging with grace and wisdom. His story was truly an invigorating celebration of courage and stamina.

John was born in an eastern town of Pennsylvania of middle-class parents. Born in 1926, John lived through the perils of growing up in the great depression. Upon graduation from college, John answered the call of Uncle Sam and joined the Army. John soon found himself an infantry soldier on the shores of Omaha Beach liberating France. With a lot of prayers, a lot of luck, and a strong steel town upbringing, John survived this ordeal. He was discharged successfully from the Army and returned to Pennsylvania where he married his high school sweetheart.

Soon thereafter, they left Pennsylvania for Maryland. Deciding on a professional career in the law, John chose to attend law school in Baltimore. After a grueling schedule of working full-time and attending school at night, John passed the Maryland Bar, and later the Delaware Bar. Both John's personal and professional life flourished. In fact and as the years passed, the good-times seemed to outweigh the bad. Soon, John was truly living the American Dream. He was at the right place at the right time! John's son even attended law school and began to practice with his Dad.

Sadly, however, John's son was diagnosed and subsequently died from leukemia. Needless to say, one cannot begin to imagine the pain and suffering of losing your only child. Still, John carried his troubles, like a heavy load and continued to work while dealing with his grief. Eventually, John, with the support of family, friends, and peers, worked through his grief, started to heal, and began to live with the grave changes in his life.

Ironically, we often hear lawyers referred to as problem-solvers. However, it is important to realize that even if a lawyer is highly successful in treating a client's dilemma, it is often difficult for the lawyer to address his/her own problems. I refer to this as the *shoemaker syndrome*; recalling the tale growing up of the shoemaker who had time to fix everyone else's shoes but his own.

Conversely, John found the tools and skills to deal with traumatizing life-events while continuing to live life and practice law successfully.

I asked John: "How did you survive such ordeals and yet maintain your own health and stamina through the 50 plus years of practicing law?"

John offered the following advice from a very old card that was affixed to his law-office wall:

1. Take Time To Think: It is the source of power.
2. Take Time To Play: It is the secret of perpetual youth.
3. Take Time To Read: It is the fountain of wisdom
4. Take Time To Pray: It is the greatest power on earth.
5. Take Time To Love and Beloved: It is a privilege.
6. Take Time To Be Friendly: It is the road to happiness.
7. Take Time To Laugh: It is the music of the soul.
8. Take Time To Give: It is too short a day to be selfish.
9. Take Time To Work: It is the price of success.
10. And remember: Life is a long and bumpy road. We each carry our troubles, like a heavy load. There are many hard turns and some dead ends, but whenever we are stuck – we must try and try again.

After our visit, I left John's office with renewed spirit and gratitude. Of course, we have planned subsequent meetings until such time as John closes his practice, but it is clearly evident that John still has so much to offer his

beloved profession. As a mentor, John has the enormous experience, wisdom and grace to teach us all about the profession and to age with grace.

I decided on this theme for the December issue because many of us will “take time” within the next few weeks to review our old resolutions and make new ones for the New Year. This is our opportunity to see where we succeeded and where we fell short, both personally and professionally.

When so doing, hopefully we will all keep in mind John and his 10 principals to a healthier, happier and more successful life.

Moreover, we can begin this year to focus on the positive and what we can all do to make our world, and the world in which each of us lives, a little better. Similarly as lawyers, we have a greater ability to make very positive influences on people’s lives both in our practice, our profession and our community. When it doubt, just think about John and his 10 Principals for Success.

For more information on quality of life issues or problems that are affecting your work productivity or quality of life, or that of a co-worker, call: The Delaware Lawyers Assistance Program (De-LAP) (302) 777-0124 or within Delaware toll free 1-877-24DELAP for confidential support.

### **Friends of Bill W.**

December 7, 2006, De-LAP is starting a 12 Step Support Group Meeting in New Castle County, Delaware for attorneys/judges *only*.

This meeting is closed to the public. The group will meet every Thursday evening at 6:30 p.m. Call Carol Waldhauser (302) 777-0124 for more information and location.

Additional meetings are being planned for Sussex County and Kent County too.

### ***Hold On! We Can Help!***

Coming in January, 2007, The Delaware Lawyers Assistance Program (De-LAP) will host a series of seminars featuring guest speakers on a variety of topics including: How To Deal With Financial Stress; Addiction: A Family Disease; Anger Management – Keeping Your Cool and Work-Place Violence. Programs begin at 4:30 p.m. at the Delaware Bar Association Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, and 301 N. Market Street, Wilmington, Delaware.

For more information, call Carol Waldhauser, Executive Director, The Delaware Lawyer Assistance Program (De-LAP), (302) 777-0124 or 1-877-24DELAP.