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Fischel & Kahn celebrates 100 years

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[In one of a series of cartoons](#) portraying the various movers and shakers of 1923 Chicago, Fischel & Kahn Ltd. founder Frederick A. Fischel was drawn variously as a farmer, golfer, radio listener and, finally, as an attorney conversing with a client.

The fact the cartoon client was a bespectacled dog doesn't change how relatable Fischel appeared in the piece.

The relatable nature of attorneys at Fischel & Kahn and the ability to connect with clients (cartoon dog or otherwise), has helped keep the firm alive for a century, said managing partner David W. Inlander.

Inlander said he understands the value of mergers in various industries, including the legal profession.

"There are reasons it makes sense, especially economically, to do so," Inlander said in an interview. "But it doesn't preclude the need for and the want that clients have for this type of law firm. If you do it right, and I think we have done it right, the demand continues. People want that connection to a particular lawyer, or group of lawyers, and we for 100 years have provided that to our clients."

Inlander has been with the firm since he joined in 1975, after graduating from Loyola University Chicago School of Law.

Fischel and Louis Kahn, who met working as attorneys at Harris Bank, co-founded the law firm in 1919, operating out of the Harris Bank building at 111 W. Monroe St. Now located at 155 W. Wacker Drive, the firm has 13 attorneys.

Kahn's son Richard Louis Kahn joined in the 1950s, and later became managing partner. Max Weinberg and Dan Brusslan joined the firm in the 1960s, when the firm became Fischel Kahn Weinberg Diamond & Brusslan. Years later, the firm changed its name back to Fischel & Kahn.

Joel H. Fenchel and Morris G. Dyner, who both joined in the late 1960s, have spent their entire careers at Fischel & Kahn.

Fenchel was drawn to the firm, in part, because of the excellent reputations of the attorneys working there.

“These were people venerated in the community,” he said in a statement. “They were scions of the South Side German Jewish community, even though back then the firm was only four or five people.”

Dyner, who was first introduced to the firm as a summer associate, was also impressed by the attorneys back then.

“From the day I walked in as a law student, I was struck by the high level of professionalism, innovative thinking and respect for the contributions each attorney made,” Dyner said in a statement. “Not only did the lawyers deliver the highest-quality legal services to clients, they also worked to generate respect for our profession.”

Inlander and principal Robert W. Kaufman largely share the administrative tasks associated with running the firm.

Kaufman has also spent his entire career at Fischel & Kahn, beginning in 1977. Kaufman graduated from the University of Maryland Carey School of Law in 1976 and the following year earned his LL.M. from the New York University School of Law.

“There still is a market apparently — fortunately for us — a good market for people who want what they perceive to be the family attorney,” Kaufman said.

He said some of the firm’s clients are the children, grandchildren or great grandchildren of Fischel & Kahn clients in the early 20th century.

Sometimes, being a ‘family attorney’ means your client calls you not to hear your legal advice, but rather because they need a sympathetic ear, Kaufman said.

“You are the person who will be there to listen to that and get them through whatever crises they are going through,” he said.

Inlander said the firm has always provided clients with a diverse array of practice areas, though those areas have changed over time.

The firm’s practice areas include civil litigation, family and divorce law, real estate law, trusts and estates, commercial transactions, business law, mediation and cooperative law and condominium and associations law.

“That is a real strength of this law firm,” he said of the various practice areas that the firm’s attorneys are experts in. “Normally, if you are a firm of 13 or 14 lawyers, you are only doing one thing ... And that’s not who we are.”

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