

Joseph L. Rider **(05/07/20)**

Joseph L. Rider, Esquire, died on May 3, 2020. Joe was a 57-year member of the Lycoming Law Association. He served as the Association's President in 1977.

The first time I heard the Rider name was when I came to Williamsport to work for Judge Muir. I often thought that Judge Muir only hired me because he had taken in Joe Rider as a partner and Rider was also a Georgetown graduate. Malcolm Muir had a great deal of affection and respect for Joe Rider, and the feeling was mutual.

Joe Rider did not practice law in my field. He was an estate lawyer, par excellence. Many young lawyers learned about diligence, hard work and excellence in terms of the high legal standards by watching Joe Rider function.

There were many times when my name was confused with his and I received telephone calls for Joe Rider. I was flattered, but the confusion was unjustified.

Joe was famous not only for keeping a large staff busy, but also being available any time of the day or night to act as a loyal servant to his clients. Joe Rider's ethics were unparalleled, and he represented for all of us just what a lawyer should be.

I became friendly with Joe over the years by serving with him on the Bench Bar Committee and having him as my own personal lawyer for an estate plan. We changed our plans so many times that any normal lawyer would have thrown us out the door years ago. Joe, however, was patient, kind, and always quick to offer direct, clear advice.

The Rider family was well-known in this community, having dedicated a large piece of land in honor of one of Joe's ancestors right above Warrensville. I walked with my dog up the hill in Rider Park on many occasions. There were times when I even cross-country skied up and down those torturous, steep trails.

Aside from being the very quintessential example of what a good and honest lawyer should be, Joe also had a good sense of humor and was always ready to answer another lawyer's question. Many times, I ran into unique Orphans' Court issues in the general litigation context. A simple phone call would secure the answer promptly from Joe.

Joe refused to accept referral fees from other lawyers. Referral fees, while legal, are often given not because the referring lawyer did any work, but simply because a lawyer refers a case to a fellow member of the Bar. I am not sure if Joe thought such fees were unethical, but they disagreed with his notion of "no work, no pay".

To say Joe was old-school belies the quality of the man. It should not be old-school to be giving to the profession, cheerful to others, and competent in one's work. Those are

the attributes that the profession should be encouraging among the Bar, as well as the Bench.

I am one of those who will miss Joe greatly, as I am sure others will as well. His passing helps to bring to a close an era when lawyers practiced just as long as they could. The concept of retirement was not a known quantity for Joe Rider. His health had never been great, but that was not an obstacle either.

Not long ago, I asked an 80-year-old doctor who I am very close with if he ever thought about retirement. He looked at me with absolute horror and said, "What would I do that brings me as much joy as being a doctor? I well understand the notion that work is not to be disdained but rather is to be celebrated. Joe understood the value of a hard day's work and a contribution to the lives of others through those efforts.

Joe Rider, rest in peace; you earned it, and you deserve it! You will be missed by all of those who still consider the law to be a profession and a craft, not simply a way of making money.

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