

Detroit Legal News.

News You Cannot Get Anywhere Else

LOGIN | SUBSCRIBE | ADVERTISE | HELP

Published: Tuesday, July 28, 2009

FRONT PAGE EDITORIAL CALENDAR STATISTICS NOTICES COURTS DETROIT / WAYNE COUNTY FORMS CLASSIFIEDS CONTACT US ABOUT US

Current Path:



Standing Tall Eminent domain lawyer casts imposing presence

By Tom Kirvan

Legal News

Darius Dynkowski isn't one to name-drop, but if he was . . .

How about Frank Sinatra for starters? Then there was the time that he rubbed elbows with Muhammad Ali, in his prime perhaps the best-known sports figure on the planet. For good measure there was Michael Jordan, arguably the greatest basketball player of all time.

Nice company to keep, for sure.

But not in a legal light for Dynkowski, a partner in the renowned eminent domain law firm headed by Alan Ackerman.

Instead, Dynkowski came to know the trio of icons while serving in his official capacity at The Palace of Auburn Hills, site of the cavernous arena that is home to the Detroit Pistons and WNBA champion Detroit Shock.

Dynkowski, you see, once was a bouncer there, more definitively part of a "two-man extraction team" that was hired to preserve the peace at The Palace and to protect high-profile celebrities from the masses. It was a job that definitely had its share of perks.

"I worked there for 8 years (from 1988-96) and I had the opportunity to meet some phenomenal people -- and, of course, some not-so-wonderful people," says Dynkowski with a smile of the invariable ups and downs of being a bouncer. "The celebrities, the players were, for the most part, very nice and down-to-earth. They were great."

The fans, especially those who had imbibed great quantities, not nearly as much.

"At certain games or concerts, we could be busy," says Dynkowski of his "extraction" duties. "Sometimes our presence was good enough to do the job. Other times, it required more. Still, all in all it was a great job. The hours were flexible to accommodate my school schedule and I got to see a ton of games and concerts. It was special."

Now, some 13 years into his legal career, Dynkowski casts a different presence. He is 70 pounds trimmer than his "bouncing" days, weight that he has peeled off his 6-foot, 4-inch frame over the past year while eating smarter and exercising more. He has gone from a 42-inch waist size to a trim 34 through a regimen of running and avoidance of all the calorie-laden "good stuff" that packs on the pounds.

On the legal side of things, he more than pulls his weight in the world of eminent domain law, teaming with his esteemed law partner to form one of the top firms that specializes in the field of condemnation proceedings. His interest in eminent domain work was sparked while a student at Detroit College of Law, where he was part of the second to last graduating class in 1996 before the school moved to its new campus at Michigan State University.

"I've always been interested in real estate law and probably would have been a real estate broker if I hadn't entered the law," Dynkowski says. "We derive a great deal of satisfaction from representing clients who have the odds stacked against them when going up against the government or utility companies. They are the definite underdogs in these eminent

Advertisements

HAVE YOUR NEXT EVENT AT THE MAJESTIC THEATRE CENTER
PLAY EAT PLAY EAT PLAY EAT
 • 200+ seats and lounge
• 200+ seats and lounge
• 200+ seats and lounge
• 200+ seats and lounge
• 200+ seats and lounge
• 200+ seats and lounge
• 200+ seats and lounge
• 200+ seats and lounge
• 200+ seats and lounge
• 200+ seats and lounge
MAJESTIC THEATRE CENTER
 4160 WOODWARD BLVD • DETROIT • 313-223-8700 EXT. 702 • SECOND FLOOR • WWW.MAJESTICTHEATRE.COM

WE'LL GET EVERY LAST DROP OF ELECTRONIC EVIDENCE.
 IF YOU THINK DIGGING THROUGH REAMS OF PAPER IS TOUGH, TRY A SQUARE OF BREAD. THAT'S EQUIVALENT TO A PEASANT TRUCK PULLED INTO OREGONVILLE. AND IT'S SOMETHING YOU COULD BE FACING IN YOUR NEXT CASE. AT COMPUTING SOURCE, ELECTRONIC DISCOVERY IS OUR SPECIALTY. OUR TEAM OF EXPERTS WILL COLLECT IT, SEARCH IT, LABEL IT, MANAGE IT, ANALYZE IT, PRESERVE AND PRODUCE IT, SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO. ONE US A CALL AND FIND OUT ALL THAT WE CAN DISCOVER FOR YOU!
 computingsource.com
Computing Source
 THE POWER IS WITH
 Detroit 313.233.1300
 Chicago 312.264.1300

domain cases and we will go to great lengths to make sure that they are fairly compensated for the loss of their property."

Dynkowski and Ackerman seem to take particular pride in taking cases that make "no economic sense" to the firm, but have a constitutional principle to uphold.

"We like to fight for those clients who are facing litigation with the government and don't have the means to make their case," says Dynkowski, who earned his bachelor's in criminal justice from Wayne State University in 1993. "There is something special about helping a client right a wrong, no matter how much money is at stake. The case might not be a money-maker for our firm, in terms of how much time and expense we have into it, but that won't stop us from getting involved."

He points to one case as a recent example in which the Oakland County Road Commission attempted to condemn a section of a gas station property for a road-widening project. The Road Commission's \$10,000 offer for the property was not met with enthusiasm by the gas station owner, who turned to the Ackerman firm for help in reaching a suitable settlement. The result: \$1.24 million for the gas station owner.

Of course, the Bloomfield Hills firm, which recently announced the opening of an office in Washington, D.C., has made headlines in a series of other more celebrated cases over the years.

Several months ago an 18-year battle over rightful compensation for a consortium of property owners impacted by work on the M-5 highway corridor in Oakland County was settled for nearly \$18 million, far from the \$1.4 million that the Michigan Department of Transportation estimated that the property was worth.

Some 5 years earlier, the firm received legal vindication when the Michigan Supreme Court sided with it in the case of Wayne County v. Hathcock, a case that revolved around the 1981 "Poletown" decision that cleared the way for the construction of the giant General Motors plant on the Detroit site. In Hathcock, the state Supreme Court reversed the Poletown decision of 23 years earlier, agreeing with Ackerman and Dynkowski that the "public use" doctrine did not permit the taking of one person's property for the purpose of giving it to another, even if it brought the promise of economic rejuvenation to a depressed area.

Dynkowski is quick to praise his partner for his seemingly uncanny ability to turn losers into winners, noting that they periodically try cases together.

"He can drive me crazy at times, tugging at my jacket to make sure that I ask a certain question of a witness," Dynkowski says with a smile. "But then I'll have the opportunity to slide him a note while he's cross-examining a witness. We're an extra set of eyes and ears for each other. It works."

A native of Hamtramck, Dynkowski graduated from De La Salle High School in Warren. His father, Walter, who died 18 years ago of pancreatic cancer, worked for 36 years on the line at the Uniroyal plant. His mother, Christine, immigrated to the U.S. from Poland at the age of 25 and owned and operated a beauty salon in Hamtramck for 20 years before retiring. She now lives in Sterling Heights. Dynkowski's brother, Gerard, is an ER physician in Milwaukee, where he lives with his wife and two children. The brothers share the same birthday, albeit 3 years apart.

"Growing up it was a bummer to always share the same cake and the same party with my brother," Dynkowski reflects. "But now it's good in the sense that we never forget each other's birthday."

As for their mother, friends have teased her over the years that she hit the "jackpot" as far as raising children, placing one in medicine and the other in the law. She probably could have used both last year when she was "t-boned at an intersection," suffering multiple injuries including a broken hip.

Fortunately, she has recovered from the injuries she suffered in the accident and can enjoy the benefits of being a close-at-hand grandmother to Dynkowski's three children. Dynkowski and his wife, Maleah, have a daughter Savannah, 12, and 5-year-old twins, Simon and Sierra. Savannah enjoys singing, dancing, basketball, and track, while the twins will enter kindergarten this fall.

His wife grew up in the state of New York and earned a bachelor's degree in social work from Madonna College, where her mother was a nursing professor. She obtained a master's degree in social work from Wayne State. He sums up their relationship in the simplest of terms.

"We really love each other," he says of their marriage that is now in its 14th year.

Somehow Dynkowski is able to neatly balance his family life with his professional responsibilities that might see him juggling up to 70 to 80 cases at any given time. He and Ackerman also teach an eminent domain class at University of Detroit Mercy School of Law and regularly speak on their area of expertise at state and national conferences. For the past 4 years, he has served as president of the Polish American Bar Association, recently turning over the gavel to District Court Judge Mark Plawecki of Dearborn Heights. In short, Dynkowski's schedule can be daunting, although he welcomes the challenge.

"Alan got me involved in teaching and with the ABA," says Dynkowski, chair of the Condemnation Committee since 2006. "I guess that I've discovered that there is always room on the plate for one more thing."

Published: 7/8/09

[FRONT PAGE](#) ▶ [EDITORIAL](#) ▶ [CALENDAR](#) ▶ [STATISTICS](#) ▶ [NOTICES](#) ▶ [COURTS](#) ▶ [DETROIT / WAYNE COUNTY](#) ▶ [FORMS CLASSIFIEDS](#) ▶ [CONTACT US ABOUT US](#)

DETROIT LEGAL NEWS PUBLISHING FAMILY

[Detroit Legal News](#)
[Macomb County Legal News](#)
[Oakland County Legal News](#)

[Flint-Genesee County Legal News](#)
[Grand Rapids Legal News](#)
[Ingham County Legal News](#)
[Jackson County Legal News](#)
[Muskegon County Legal News](#)
[Washtenaw County Legal News](#)

COPYRIGHT DETROIT LEGAL NEWS PUBLISHING L.L.C . INFLUENCING THE LEGAL COMMUNITY SINCE 1895

[Terms Of Use](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)