

Max Rayle

Max Rayle, a well known attorney throughout Northwest Ohio and statewide, passed away at 11:35 on October 31, 2013 from complications with a two year battle with lung cancer. Max practiced civil, criminal, administrative, general and appellate law from a base in Bowling Green for 37 years.

Max began his career as a staff attorney and referee (now magistrate) with the Wood County Common Pleas Court in 1976 and then joined the firm of Middleton and Roebke in 1978, where he became a partner. In 1989, he and Jodie Stearns formed a new practice at the corner of South Main and West Wooster Street which eventually became Rayle, Matthews and Coon which operates out of the same location today.

Max was born in Findlay, Ohio on January 3, 1949. He received his undergraduate degree from Findlay College in 1972 and his law degree from the University of Toledo, College of Law in 1976. He married his wife Susan Rench Rayle on October 6, 1973. She too is a native of Findlay, Ohio. He and Susan were born one day apart. Max and Susan had two children, Matthew of Toledo, Ohio and Christopher who presently resides in Columbus, Ohio. All three survive as does a special niece, Shelly Hancock Urdaneta of Lyndhurst, Ohio who had been like a surrogate daughter since the Rayle marriage. Max was also survived by his sister-in-law Peggy Hancock, 7 siblings that were located in Findlay, Ohio, Vanlue, Ohio and Oldmar, Florida.

Max practiced law with Fred Matthews and Scott Coon from the late 1980s/early 1990s until his passing . Despite his illness, Max continued to work to the day of his death. When he went into the hospital, and even to hospice, his briefcase went with him. Max wanted to ensure that his passing did not affect his clients, primarily his most needy and less sophisticated ones. His family and the practice of law were the heart of his being. Max lived and breathed the law.

Max took great pride in representing all kinds of clients in all different kinds of cases, civil, criminal, administrative and at all levels of the court from municipal court level up to the Ohio Supreme Court where he appeared multiple times. Max represented with equal zeal the regular Joe down the street , large well established businesses, governmental agencies, judges, lawyers and their families. Many times Max's adversaries became his clients when they, in turn, needed assistance.

Max was a great litigator, no matter the type of case . He could and did try all kinds of cases. Max would tackle the most challenging of cases that other lawyers did not want handle, in areas of law that initially Max may not have known very much about. He would educate himself on the area of the law, eventually becoming an expert. Before entering the courtroom Max was always extremely well prepared. There was no one that would prepare more than Max when he was going to trial. Many lawyers who tried cases against Max said they were better lawyers for having tried cases against him.

On a personal level, Max took his membership in the Bar as a special bond that he shared with other brethren of the Bar. He would oftentimes represent lawyers for little or no compensation, that had had some trouble or problems in their practice. Max would do anything for a lawyer that

found himself in need of representation, often doing it without regard to compensation. Max also was very generous with his time, often mentoring young lawyers.

Max not only gave back to the profession on a personal level by representing lawyers and judges throughout the state, but also served locally as the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Wood County Bar Association Law Library, and was for decades the Chairman of the Wood County Public Defender Commission. Later in his career he was very proud and took great interest and dedication to his election to the Ohio State Bar Association Board of Governors. He also served as the Chairman of the Bar Association Board's Budget and Headquarters Committee during the last year of his term. Known by many for his great sense of humor, he took great pride in the fact that he was elected as the 21st "jester" of the Ohio State Bar Association Board with the primary duty to see to it that the voluntarily leadership of the Ohio State Bar Association did not take itself too seriously all the time. It was an assignment that he truly relished.

Max enjoyed his family, reading and travelling. He was a great fan of OSU football. He was a great student of history. He enjoyed travelling with members of his family to historical sites, notably Washington D.C. and the Gettysburg Battlefield.

Max was a legend for his skill, engaging personality and dedication to his clients. He was the voice of reason and common sense. Many were lucky enough to know Max as an opponent, a co-counsel, as a partner and as a mentor. Many have said that Max was the best trial attorney that they had observed, that he owned the courtroom. He both educated and entertained juries. Max was a caring, kind attorney that other attorneys went to when they needed representation.