

LEADERSHIP IN LAW 2024: Grant Achenbach

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(IL photo/Eric Learned)

Krieg DeVault LLP

Indiana University McKinney School of Law, 2019

Why did you decide to enter the legal profession?

I've always been fascinated by the intersection of business and government, an interest that was sparked by an influential teacher I had in high school. Through an internship with the Indiana House of Representatives, I got a front-row seat to how the political process at the state level has a real impact on our everyday lives, and how lawyers and lobbyists can be effective advocates for their clients in that space. While I was previously on the

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fence about graduate school, this experience pushed me down the path toward law school.

What's the best advice you've ever received?

Value your integrity and reputation above all else in everything you do. To me, that means that regardless of the ups and downs and positive or negative results, as long as you conduct yourself in the right way and know you have worked as hard as you can, you should be proud of your work.

If you hadn't pursued a legal career, what would you be doing?

My undergraduate degree is in business marketing, so I would probably be in marketing, sales or business development.

Who is someone who has inspired you in your career?

When I worked at the House of Representatives for the Republican caucus, Brian Bosma was the speaker of the House, and I always looked up to his leadership in that role. Specifically, he was always a champion for civility in the legislative and political process. He also led in a manner that held firmly to a core set of principles and viewed all the issues faced in the legislature through that lens.

What makes a good lawyer/judge?

A well-respected political leader in Indiana once said, "It's a mighty thin pancake that doesn't have two sides." I think being able to objectively analyze a set of facts or a policy question and understand all perspectives and all sides involved is vital to representing clients effectively.

What is something you wish people knew about lawyers?

I think many folks outside of the legal profession have a narrow view of lawyers, thinking that we only deal with criminal issues, personal/family issues or litigation. It would be beneficial for people to understand the wide variety of roles and positions that a legal background prepares you for.

Tell us about a "lesson learned" moment you've had in your career.

Often our jobs as effective lobbyists and advocates are to help our clients find workable solutions with policymakers. However, in some instances, this isn't possible. Realizing that fact as early in the process as possible and dealing with it with transparency and integrity, even if there's a chance your client may lose, is sometimes the best path forward.

Tell us something surprising about you.

In college at Taylor University, I was part of a group that won the school's "Airband" contest (essentially a hyped up lip-syncing and choreography competition).