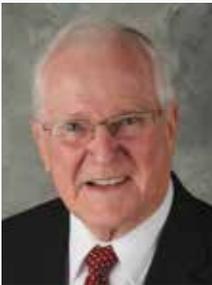


UNDERSTANDING OUR CHANGING COMMUNITY

with

KEN SCHNEIDER

As explained by Bill Santen in the July 2015 issue of the CBA Report, the Senior Lawyers Division is publishing a series of articles, each written by a veteran lawyer, seeking to reveal who the author really is, what s/he really wants in life, and how we are going to achieve an even better community.



My name is Ken Schneider and 2016 will mark my 50th year practicing law. I am currently of counsel with Wood & Lamping, having spent my entire legal career with that firm and its predecessors in every position from associate to managing partner. My interest in local politics helped me develop a specialty in municipal law with my firm, serving over the years as counsel to many municipalities

including St. Bernard, Mason, Springdale and Sycamore Township. Over the course of my legal career, I have been active in the Cincinnati Bar Association as a member of the Executive Committee, and I served 21 years in the House of Delegates for the Ohio State Bar Association.

I am a lifelong Cincinnati, born and raised in Northside to German and Irish parents. I graduated from Roger Bacon High School, Xavier University (Magna Cum Laude) and Chase Law School, while working as a brand manager at Procter & Gamble. All three of my children raised their children, my nine grandchildren, in Cincinnati. Cincinnati is a wonderful community and it is my home, yet I have always had a passion to see the world and meet people from other cultures and circumstances. With work and family activities consuming virtually all of my time during the first two decades of my practice, the opportunity to travel outside the U.S. did not present itself until I was in my 40s. Since then I have visited six continents and 23 countries.

So how does my passion for travel fit into this segment on “Understanding our Changing Community”? In the words of Mark Twain, “*Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness..... Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one’s lifetime.*” The fundamental truth of Twain’s statement from the 19th century resounds even louder today in a world struggling with extreme hatred and radicalism that comes from fearing different races, religions and cultures.

During my travels, I drank beer with Germans both before and after the fall of the Berlin Wall and communism. I mingled

with protestors in Ecuador at the height of that country’s economic crisis in an attempt to better understand the socio-political issues that stunted the economy. I stood in Nelson Mandela’s cell on Robben Island where he was imprisoned and sentenced to hard labor for 27 years for seeking basic human rights by challenging apartheid in South Africa. In the 1990s, as China was trying to become an economic power, I witnessed the painful process of industrializing a largely uneducated and rural country where hay wagons were still delivering auto cabs to factories for assembly. I felt the abject desperation and misery in the Kibera district of Nairobi, Kenya, which is said to have the largest slum in the world, and watched understandingly only a couple years later as violent riots erupted in that area.

While visiting Beijing, China, I met a lady who became our voluntary tour guide and even provided medicine for our sick comrade. Also, she told us about how she was seeking a scholarship at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio and had been rejected. I agreed to make a personal contact when I returned to America. The administrator at the university asked me to write on my letterhead what I had told him by phone about the lady. I did. The Beijing student advised me two months later that she was granted a full scholarship to complete her master’s degree. Later, she invited me to be her surrogate father at her wedding in America.

My desire to know and understand the people of our world has increased with age (and I like to think, wisdom) so I have tried to pass this interest on to my grandchildren. When each of my grandchildren becomes a teenager, I travel with him/her to anyplace in the world of their choosing. I want to encourage them to find the common humanity in all people regardless of their differences.

If we can foster a “broad, wholesome, charitable view” of people from different cultures, religions and races, our community will be a better place. My challenge to all is to improve our community by becoming citizens of the world through travel and engaging with good people in their homeland.

Schneider is of counsel at Wood & Lamping, where he has practiced law his entire legal career. Following his own recommendation he will be traveling to Cuba this spring for new experiences to further his goal of becoming a citizen of the world.