

Stability in work, life key for David Denton

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While the practice of law has certainly changed over the past 50 years, it doesn't appear that Paducah attorney David Denton's approach to it has.

Glenn Denton, David's son and one of a number of partners in the Denton Law Firm, knew he wanted to follow in his father's footsteps from a young age.

"It's the research, the writing, the debate, the advocacy, it all kind of goes hand-in-hand," Denton said.

According to the younger Denton, his father's ability "is equal in all of those parts, but he is also fantastic in the area of corporate law, business and municipal law, things of that nature."

In conversation with Glenn regarding his father, the number 50 comes up. David Denton is marking 50 years as an attorney, and Glenn, coincidentally, just celebrated his 50th birthday.

"I spent the first 25 years of my life (all told in school, and law school) trying to be a lawyer and the next 25 years practicing law with my father."

The 50-year subject goes beyond work.

"One of the things that is remarkable about my family is that Mom (Ann) and Dad have been married for over 50 years," Glenn Denton said. "That stability is so important and is a gift they gave me and a testament to them."

Stability is also something that comes up in conversation with some

longtime employees of the Denton firm.

Roxanne Wright, office manager, has worked at the firm for 33 years.

With that longevity in one place, Wright admits she doesn't have a long list of bosses to compare David Denton to, but "he is the best person you could ever imagine for a boss. He's understanding, he's always the first one to say 'good job.' He is an amazing leader and is highly respected in the office."

According to Wright, Denton is serious when he needs to be, but also light-hearted and caring about the employees' work life and personal life.

"One thing that sticks out in my mind has to do with family," she said. "When I had my daughter, instead of the firm buying a gift for her, Dave wanted to buy something for my 6-year-old son because he didn't want him to feel left out. That's just how caring he is."

In addition to founding Denton Law Firm, David Denton, a Kentucky native and an Army veteran, has served in leadership roles in a number of community organizations, including the Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce, Greater Paducah Economic Development, and the McCracken County Public Library board of trustees.

His numerous community accomplishments include heading a fundraising campaign that brought in \$8.4 million in donations to build the University of Kentucky College of Engineering on the campus of West

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Kentucky Community and Technical College. He has also been inducted into the Hall of Fame at the University of Kentucky College of Law, where he earned his law degree.

His participation as the guest of honor at a charity "roast" fundraiser for St. Nicholas Healthcare Payment Assistance raised \$30,100.

Jan Burnett, another longtime law firm employee, recalls Denton was not initially real excited about being the subject of a roast, "but he did that just because he felt that was a good cause."

Burnett started working for Denton in 1970. Although she retired in 2014, Denton coaxed her back to work a brief time later in an apparent display of his negotiation skills.



Burnett and her husband like to travel, but ultimately she was given an offer she couldn't refuse.

"David said, 'Would you work just two days a week?' and I said we're gone all the time," Burnett said. "He said, 'You can work any two days you want, and you can work as many hours as you want.'

"So, I'm still working ... and I work two days a week," she added, noting she will celebrate 49 years in November.

She echoed Wright's sentiments about her boss.

"By the end of every week, he has been around to every one of us, stopped by our desk, asked how things are going," she said.

"I think it's because he sincerely cares about us for who we are and what we're doing in our lives. He's looking at us not just as an employee. He cares about us a person."

It is that philosophy, Burnett believes, that inspires loyalty among the staff and leads him to be active in the community.

"I just think the world of him," she said. "I've been blessed to be a part of the Denton Law Firm, and I probably will be here for as long as they'll let me." ■