

The Daily Transcript[®]

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INDUSTRY INSIDER Q&A WITH DAVID CASEY JR.

Plaintiffs' attorney making difference in people's lives

(Editor's note: The Daily Transcript is running an occasional interview series with San Diego's leaders in real estate, development, construction, law and finance. If you know of someone we should chat with next, please send suggestions to Doug Sherwin at doug_sherwin@sdtranscript.com.)

David Casey Jr. is managing partner of Casey Gerry Schenk Francavilla Blatt & Penfield LLP, which is celebrating its 70th anniversary in San Diego. With a career spanning 40 years, Casey's legal skills and landmark cases have had far-reaching consequences, affecting both consumers and the legal community.

Daily Transcript: What was the last book you read?

David Casey Jr.: "Camino Island" by John Grisham

DT: What was the last movie you saw in a theater?

DC: "Wonder Woman."

DT: What is one thing you can't go without?

DC: Daily exercise is critical in dealing with the challenges of running a law firm.

DT: Out of the office, where can we find you?

DC: Enjoying life with my bride Lisa of 30 years.

DT: The best thing about the city of San Diego is ...

DC: It's climate.

DT: If I wasn't a lawyer, I'd be ...

DC: An entrepreneur.

DT: Who is your business role model?

DC: Lawyers in a good marriage who have the unique ability to combine the trial practice with sound business practice.

DT: What is the most gratifying aspect of your job?

DC: Making a positive difference in people's lives.

DT: Your firm just celebrated its 70th anniversary. What has been the key to its longevity?

DC: We have many employees who have been with us over 30 years. We have a very flat organization that treats employees well, and listens to their opinions.

We have a very open door for ideas and criticism. Another key factor is having a long view of the practice of law and building it gradually.

DT: What would your dad [firm founder David Casey Sr.] think about the state of the firm today and that it's still going strong?

DC: My dad would be amazed with the direction our firm has gone in and the impact it is having both statewide and nationally. The complexity and size of the cases have changed to multi-million and multi-billion dollar cases with a broad social impact.



Tom Kurtz/Special to The Daily Transcript

Casey Gerry Schenk Francavilla Blatt & Penfield managing partner David Casey Jr. has been helping clients, both locally and across the country, for more than 40 years.

DT: What is one case that you think best epitomizes the firm?

DC: We have handled many sensitive cases where both our clients and the defendants wanted to maintain their privacy. In a case involving a quadriplegic, I was very proud that early in our being retained we were able to obtain immediate 24-hour care and around the clock support, which helped stabilize the family. Negotiations, which led to a successful settlement, followed later. However, in the meantime, all the life care needs of this client were met.

We try to think outside the box when we approach serious injury cases and to do everything we can to help the families as much as possible.

DT: Which case presented the biggest challenge?

DC: Without question, the Exxon Valdez case, which took over 26 years and involved numerous appeals due to changing law in the Supreme Court, comes to mind. We represented more than 1,000 fishermen – among more than 14,000 fishermen, cannery workers and landlords whose livelihoods and property were damaged following the massive the oil spill.

It was very hard for these clients to understand why such a long delay would occur.

DT: Which case had the most satisfying outcome?

DC: I was honored to be appointed by a federal judge in San Francisco early last year to be one of the lawyers to lead the national litigation against Volkswagen, which resulted from the fraud involved in its diesel emissions. That case required a seven-day work week with around the clock efforts and resulted in a final settlement of over \$11 billion.

It was almost the polar opposite of the Exxon Valdez case. Consumers were able to get their cars replaced, repaired or fully compensated very quickly in the largest consumer class action in history.

DT: What is your hope for the firm for the next 70 years?

DC: Our philosophy is to treat each client we represent at the very highest level of advocacy and to always put their interests first. I believe that is one of the keys to our sustained growth over the years, helping us to become one of the largest plaintiffs' personal injury firms in California.

It is my hope for the future that the firm continues to handle cases which have a major impact in our culture, both locally and nationally. I hope that the comradery we have shared over the years continues.