

## Around the Water Cooler

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### It's Not Just Another Mentoring Program, Part 2

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The John Marshall Law School's Lawyer-to-Lawyer Mentoring Program began in 2011 in collaboration with the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism, matching practicing alumni with recent graduates. Over the past two years, we've received a tremendous amount of feedback and support from the mentors and the mentees. We put that feedback to work, expanding the program dramatically and focusing the program on those issues of professionalism that affect all developing attorneys, while still leaving room for the mentors and mentees to create a unique relationship.

Last week, in Part 1 of "It's Not Just Another Mentoring Program," I offered the insights of Karen Dimond, an assistant state's attorney with the state of Illinois. Part 2 continues below with insights from Barry A. Kozak, an adjunct faculty member at John Marshall and the director of our Elder Law Programs.

#### **Barry A. Kozak**

Professor Barry A. Kozak, a mentor who teaches at John Marshall, served as a panelist for the mentoring orientation. Barry is the director of John Marshall's Elder Law Programs. He mentors John Fehr who started his own law office, the Fehr Law Group LLC, with his brother, Karl, in the Monadnock Building at 53 W. Jackson Blvd. When I asked Barry what was different about the Lawyer-to-Lawyer Mentoring Program, he offered the following interesting observations:

"I have considered myself to be a mentor to many law students and new attorneys for many years and have freely enjoyed helping each individual succeed; however, the Lawyer-to-Lawyer Program is something much more unique and special than simply being a sounding board. The structure and mandates for me as mentor actually made me think about and develop strategies that would benefit my mentee, based on his specific needs and desires. In turn, I wound up learning a lot from my mentee, as each meeting was a discussion and not simply me listening and offering advice off the top of my head. The bond formed between my mentee and me will hopefully endure for the remainder

of both of our careers, and I certainly hope that he will become a mentor after he has some more experience under his belt. I actually cannot wait to rejoin the program in the future where I will be paired with other exciting and intelligent individuals who seek mentoring."

Barry's mentee John Fehr offered the following thoughts about his experience with the mentoring program:

"The mentor-mentee program is an incredibly valuable and structured program in which a new attorney can benefit from the wisdom of an experienced attorney. There are so many important issues and questions that arise for young attorneys. How should a new lawyer deal with a difficult client? What is the best way to organize a client file? What is the best way to speak and to argue before a judge? What are some weekly or monthly tasks that every small law firm should have in place in order to be successful and organized? Having a mentor to call on and consult with regarding inevitable questions like these makes this program well worth a new attorney's time. I think mentors in this program will find that the new attorneys have many questions and are eager to learn from their years of experience."

*To view Part 1 of "It's Not Just Another Mentoring Program," go to <http://professionalism.jmls.edu/>. The series will conclude with the reflections of John Marshall grads Jeanine Cunningham and David Bickel.*