

McGrady reaches major milestone as

By Allen Worrell

News Writer

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Local defense attorney Joe McGrady is celebrating his 35th anniversary of practicing law in Carroll County this March.

That figure is impressive enough on its own, but McGrady recently crunched some numbers that particularly put that time span into perspective.

"I got to calculating how many court cases I have handled," McGrady said. "It used to be 30-some a week, but to be conservative, I ran the numbers figuring at least 20 cases a week. Based on that, I figured I've handled approximately 35,000 court cases. That's sort of scary to think about."

Along the same lines, based on a conservative figure of four times a week, McGrady estimates he has gone to court at least 7,000 times since opening his own law practice in March of 1973.

Those numbers are mind-boggling, but the same thing could probably have been said about McGrady when he blazed a trail into Carroll County in the early 1970s.

"I was told I was the first lawyer in Carroll County in over 60 years to start their own practice without going in with an older lawyer," McGrady said. "I just started from scratch. I was always sort of proud of that."

Just as impressive, McGrady had also served as a mentor for many of the area's finest attorneys. At one time or another, seven future attorneys worked in McGrady's office before they became lawyers, while another future lawyer read law in his office. Those attorneys include Tom Jackson, Gregory G. Goad, Libby Rakes, Joey Haynes, Jenny Bond, Steve Olivera, and McGrady's sons, Jonathan and Chad.

"I gave a lot of people opportunities," McGrady said. "I was always glad of the fact I was able to give some people opportunity to get started. They've all turned out very well and I am proud of what they have been able to do in the legal field. Of course, one was a state delegate (Jackson), one is a Commonwealth's Attorney (Goad), and the others are in successful law practices."

McGrady said Raleigh and George Cooley, Sr. helped him when he was a young attorney starting out, so he wanted to do the same.

"All the lawyers here were very helpful to me and kind," McGrady said. "That is sort of a tradition we



The McGrady & McGrady, LLP team, standing from left: Amy Shupe, Gina Crowder, Jonathan McGrady, Kathy Barnes, Terena Crawford. Joe McGrady is seated.

have had here in Carroll County of helping new lawyers." McGrady teams with son Jonathan to form McGrady & McGrady, LLP. McGrady & McGrady is strictly a trial practice, working cases ranging from personal injury, criminal, and DUI cases to divorce, domestic and custody. McGrady handles criminal cases in the counties of Carroll, Grayson, Montgomery and Floyd, as well as the cities of Galax and Radford, while his son handles the same cases in Wythe, Bland and Pulaski Counties. Joe McGrady said he will go anywhere on a personal injury case.

Over the past 35 years, McGrady steadily built a reputation as one of the finest defense attorneys around. Some of McGrady's biggest cases include the Nelson King case in the mid-1980s and the David Salmons Case in 1987. Salmons' was charged with the double homicide of a father and son, but ultimately was found not guilty by reason of insanity. King was charged with felony murder for the death of an individual after King allegedly crashed a plane into Fancy Gap Mountain while transporting a large quantity of marijuana. King was ultimately found not guilty after the Supreme Court reversed a decision in the case.

More recently, McGrady defended Karen Mills for charges of murdering her husband. Mills' charge was eventually reduced to manslaughter and she was ordered to serve just three months.

"He was amazing to watch during that trial and I will never forget the

closing argument," McGrady & McGrady paralegal Terena Crawford said. "There wasn't a dry eye and it was a very high-profile case in this area. I was very impressed with how he handled it and the level of carrying he had, that after 34 years he could still feel that deep for someone's defense."

McGrady said he can't always help everybody, but he does the best he can to help his clients achieve the best possible result.

"People think I have a magic wand. I have had pretty good luck, but I can't get everybody off," he said. "I have tried real hard for people and I have put the time in to try to get the best results we can. You can't always win, but lots of times you can minimize the damage to the person."

Jonathan McGrady has also been very successful in the field and he was recently appointed to the Criminal Justice Services Board by Governor Tim Kaine. Jonathan serves the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court as his designee, the head of the state police, and the head of the Sheriff's Association, among others on the board. Jonathan is the only defense attorney on the board and the only person serving in that capacity west of Roanoke.

Joe McGrady is also proud of his firm's accessibility as the office is open at least from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. during the week. Someone is always there as the office stays open during lunch hours.

"We are real proud of our hours. It is very accessible for people to get in here," McGrady said. "We will

schedule later appointments."

The firm also tries worthwhile causes in. Each year, McGrady gives at least a \$1,000 to a graduating senior at High School.

"People have been around here and I feel we can do is support and individuals that here," he said.

McGrady is full of memories of the old days of Carroll County in the Carroll County Courthouse many interesting histories to the courthouse the infamous Courthouse 1912. All three of them were involved in the shootout great uncles or great-grand uncles. McGrady's great-grandfather, McGrady Allen was represented by Bolen, who was his great-uncle by Walt Tipton, who was his great-uncle. Then-Carroll County Attorney William F. Bolen killed in the shootout



Local defense attorney Joe McGrady is celebrating his 35th anniversary of practicing law in Carroll County this March. McGrady has 45 years of experience.

Reaches major milestone as local attorney



McGrady & McGrady, LLP team, standing from left: Amy Terena Crowder, Jonathan McGrady, Kathy Barnes, William Foster, and Joe McGrady. Joe McGrady is seated.

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The firm also tries to give back to worthwhile causes in the community. Each year, McGrady & McGrady gives at least a \$1,000 scholarship to a graduating senior at Carroll County High School.

"People have been good to us around here and I feel like the least we can do is support the community and individuals that live around here," he said.

McGrady is full of humorous stories of the old days of serving law in Carroll County in the Historic Carroll County Courthouse. He also has many interesting historical connections to the courthouse, particularly the infamous Courthouse Tragedy of 1912. All three of the lawyers involved in the shootout were either great uncles or great-great uncles of McGrady's. McGrady said Floyd Allen was represented by David Bolen, who was his great uncle, and by Walt Tipton, who was his great-great uncle. Then-Commonwealth's Attorney William Foster, who was killed in the shootout, was also Mc-

Grady's great-great uncle by marriage. Joe Blankenship, who was sheriff at the time of Floyd Allen's arrest, was McGrady's great-great grandfather, while another of McGrady's great-great uncles married Sidna Allen's daughter. Ironically, McGrady also knew one of the jurors that heard the trial.

"I thought it was interesting I practiced law for all those years in the place where my great-great uncles were when the shootout happened," McGrady said.

As for the future, don't be surprised if McGrady doesn't write more local history of his own. He says he has no plans of slowing down anytime soon.

"I have no intention of retiring in the foreseeable future. I still get a lot of satisfaction out of helping people. That hasn't waned," McGrady said. "As long as I feel that way and my health holds up, I figure I will just keep going. I have hobbies, but I think I would miss not coming in the law office, and I would especially miss not seeing people."



Local defense attorney Joe McGrady (seated) is celebrating his 35th anniversary of practicing law in Carroll County this March. McGrady and son Jonathan team to bring more than 45 years of experience to the area.