

Tully's Military Service in Iraq Recognized by Bar Association President

Seasoned attorneys often complain that civility among lawyers is diminishing. It's refreshing to learn that civility is alive and well in our area and was not lost, as rumored, with the replacement of carbon paper.

Jack Clark recently invited me to the ceremony commemorating his retirement from the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard. Jack asked me to attend as the Association President to represent the many lawyers in the region who have afforded him courtesies over the years because of his frequent absences for military duty. He noted that attorneys willingly rescheduled closings, conferences, litigation deadlines, and everything in between to accommodate his military commitments. No one has denied him an extension or accommodation, or questioned his requests.

Jack's observations are a welcome tribute to our local practitioners. Although reasonable extensions are imperative for attorneys serving in the Reserves, similar courtesies are granted daily to accommodate the professional and personal commitments of nearly all attorneys and their clients.

Our lawyers bring to their clients the quality, skill and diligence of the leading national firms. Nevertheless, they have the perspective to recognize that the refusal of a reasonable accommodation seldom advances the interest of the client. In fact, it usually backfires. Denying an attorney a reasonable extension is like poking a wounded animal with a stick; they usually come back twice as ferocious and committed.

Of equal importance, the refusal of a reasonable request often provokes a call to the Court for an accommodation. No client's interests are advanced by demonstrating to the Court that his or her attorney is both discourteous and unreasonable. Jack's experience is also a tribute to the way in which he practices law. The rules of civility are usually self-enforcing. Courtesies are granted to those who demonstrate a willingness to reciprocate. As the saying goes, what goes around comes around.

Notably, Jack is retiring as a Major General. Most recently, he has been in charge of the training, oversight and readiness of 260 Air National Guard Attorneys and 160 Guard paralegals. Jack's retirement also brings to mind many other attorneys currently or recently serving in the Reserves in Iraq and the greater Middle East.

These include Colonel Ed Downey, Colonel Dan McGraw, Major Chris Hanifi n, Major Larry Schaefer, Major Mathew Tully, Major Alan Fitzpatrick, Captain Samuel Spitzberg and others.

The rules of civility among attorneys seem trivial against the backdrop of the war in Iraq. However, we are truly fortunate to live in a society where courtesy and civility matter. We are also truly fortunate to be served by citizen soldiers who willingly sacrifice time from family and careers to apply their legal talents to our national commitments.

