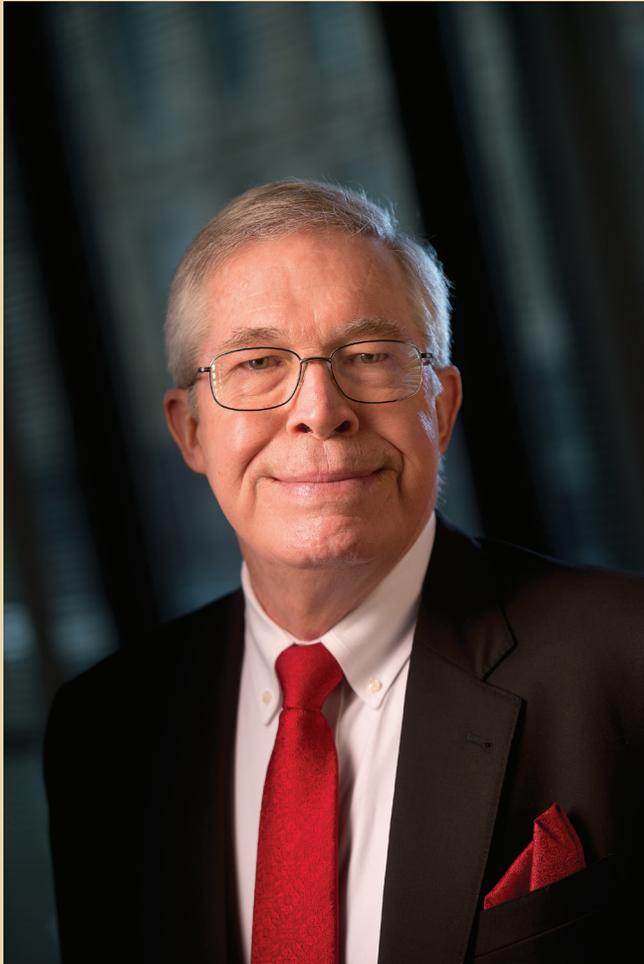


Thomas Shannon

FOX, O'NEILL & SHANNON

Shannon starts quick, never slows down



Within 48 hours of being admitted into the Illinois bar, Tom Shannon had his first jury trial.

Fresh out of law school and having clerked for a litigation firm, Shannon thought litigation was calling to him. But the birth of his first child and the stress of trial work made him rethink that.

During a short tour of duty in the Army, he decided to draw from his undergraduate business degree and instead do business law. He joined Fox, O'Neill & Shannon in 1973.

William Fox, shareholder and founder of the firm, has been Shannon's best friend for 45 years. Shannon, he said, is one of the brightest lawyers at the firm.

"He represents his clients with tremendous loyalty and concern, and does all in his power to accomplish the goal of his client, if that's legally possible," Fox said.

Shannon's work includes everything from saving local banks from insolvency to corporate restructuring, commercial code transactions and has focused on complex business transactions such as commercial mergers, sales and purchases.

"It's not rocket science," Shannon said. "Granted, when we put a contract together, it can be 30 to 40 pages of boilerplate. But at the end of the day a lot of what business law involves is giving people good, commonsense advice. What we're trying to do is help clients realize their dreams and help clients stave off their worst nightmares."

Thomas noted that while he represents businesses, those businesses are owned by families that put their trust in him, which he considers a huge complement.

"I really love the clients I work with," he said. "A huge number of clients have been my best friends. That's part of why I continue to practice law to this day."

And clients love Shannon. For example, Shannon has represented Daniel Ewald, his father, brothers and their family owned businesses since 1980. Ewald, who is president of Waukesha-based Ewald Fleet Solutions, said that their relationship is one of mutual respect.

"He's a man of a very high level of integrity," Ewald said. "He is certainly tenacious when it comes to representing us in our best interest. He's an Irish catholic, so maybe that's part of it."

Ewald and Shannon's professional relationship evolved into friendship, and they go on a fishing trip each year.

One thing that's striking about Shannon personally, Ewald said, is that Shannon has found a balance between being there for his family for important life events but still doing whatever it takes for his clients.

"He's extremely family oriented — he's very tight, very close to his family," said Ewald. "I really admire the way that he and his wife raised their family."

— Erika Strebel

