

JACOB MANIAN, associate attorney, Fox, O'Neill & Shannon SC, Milwaukee

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL, 2007



Manian excels in criminal law

Jacob Manian prosecuted nearly 40 felony trials before joining Fox, O'Neill & Shannon SC, Milwaukee, in 2012.

Now the former prosecutor in Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office has added defense to his repertoire, leading the firm's efforts to greatly expand its criminal law services.

Diane Slomowitz, attorney and shareholder with Fox, O'Neill & Shannon, said Manian brings substance, confidence and presence to the firm.

"During his tenure at the district attorney's office, Jake developed two important qualities," she said, "a practical professional seasoning beyond his years, and the ability to create and maintain a criminal defense practice."

Since he joined the firm, Slomowitz said, it's been able to expand its civil practice into the criminal law arena, working on defense cases as well as guiding clients who may have been the victim of white-collar crimes.

Before he made the switch, Manian estimates he handled about 3 dozen jury trials in his 4 ½ years as a prosecutor. He said he left for private practice because of his previous position's financial realities and his desire to try criminal defense.

Jane Foley, a victim witness specialist in the Milwaukee County district attor-

ney's domestic violence unit, worked with Manian while both served in the district attorney's sensitive crime unit. She praised his ability to communicate with jurors, even in difficult and disturbing cases.

"He has a way of connecting with jurors and bringing things down to their level," Foley said.

In law school, Manian said he was told by Robert Donohoo, former Milwaukee deputy district attorney, that he would need to do at least two dozen jury trials before any advice about jurors could even help him, an assertion Manian found to be accurate.

"Any time you do a jury trial, you look back and you say, 'Gee I could have done this or that better,'" Manian said. "But really you have to do a bunch of them before you even know what to improve on."

Manian was perhaps destined to be an attorney. His grandfather, Victor Manian, was a Milwaukee County circuit court judge for nearly 40 years and served as a deputy district attorney under E. Michael McCann. His wife, younger sister and brother-in-law also are attorneys.

"Discussions and debates" are frequent, Manian said.

— Andy Turner