Matthew O'Neill *Fox, O'Neill & Shannon*

O'Neill's optimism proves successful in courtroom, community

Matthew O'Neill's infectious optimism and commitment to justice make the legal profession better for all.

O'Neill, a shareholder of Fox, O'Neill & Shannon, directs his practice toward commercial litigation and arbitration. He obtained a $100 million appeal win for We Energies and argued two cases involving shareholder rights and special-litigation committees before the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

"I learned that a disciplined and methodical approach to a complicated case is the only way to get to the core issues," O'Neill said. "I also learned that 12% interest on $100 million adds up fast."

And it's not just the big cases that are important to O'Neill. He approaches his many pro bono cases with the same vigor and dedication. He said advice from his father, attorney Bruce O'Neill, put his duty to his clients into perspective.

"My dad taught me early on that every client's case is the most important case they will ever have," O'Neill said.

O'Neill became his father's voice in the courtroom, winning all his final cases. Bruce O'Neill was at one point diagnosed with ALS, which he died from less than a year later. As the disease progressed, he began to have trouble speaking.

"One was an arbitration for a long-time client, and I could tell my dad was loving it when I cross-examined the opposing party to shreds," O'Neill said.

O'Neill is a member of the ALS Association of Wisconsin's leadership team and organizes a fundraiser in his dad's memory every year. He's very well-known for his role in establishing the association's Judge Terry Evans Humor and Creativity in Law Competition and his accompanying costumes.

His joy for life makes him more than just a powerhouse lawyer, said Diane Slomowitz, shareholder at Fox, O'Neill & Shannon.

"Everyone he meets — clients, colleagues, judges or arbitrators, strangers — is left feeling better with more or new faith in the present and future," Slomowitz said.

— *Michaela Paukner*