

Long Island Business NEWS

July 16-22, 2004

Where Business Gets Down To Business

Vol. 51 No. 30 • \$1.50

Siblings keep law practice in the family

By ROSAMARIA MANCINI

MINEOLA – It was 1956 when Sheldon Flanzig launched a general-practice law firm that dabbled in the personal-injury market.

Today, nearly a half-century later, that firm has morphed into Flanzig & Flanzig. But it's not Sheldon running the show anymore; it's his kids Daniel and Cathy.

The sibling team has picked up where their father left off. They've also put their heads together to grow the personal-injury side of the business, which is the sole area practiced by the Flanzigs nowadays.

They represent clients that claim to have suffered significant injuries or wrongful death as a result of automobile, motorcycle and construction accidents, medical malpractice or defective products.

The Flanzigs tried about 50 cases last year and have about 200 open right now.

"The firm is looking to become more of a boutique personal injury specialist, one of a kind," Daniel Flanzig said.

Translation: The Flanzig siblings want to dominate the personal-injury space, but to do that, they'll have to go up against the likes of Mineola-based Sanders, Sanders, Block, Woycik, Viener & Grossman and Garden City-based Levine & Grossman, both of which have a following in that market.

Neither child would have been so passionate about the law had it not been for their dad, they said.

While Sheldon Flanzig operated what was then known as Joachim & Flanzig, Daniel and Cathy watched on as kids. Around the dinner table in their Huntington home, the elder Flanzig discussed trial work, the art of advocacy and the impact that an effective attorney can have on another person's life.

So it was no surprise to their father that both Cathy and Daniel chose to attend law school and become personal-injury attorneys.



FAMILY AFFAIR: Sister-and-brother team Cathy and Daniel Flanzig took over their father's law practice.

Cathy, now 44, earned a juris doctorate from Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University in New York, and her brother, 36, received the same from Queens College of the City University of New York School of Law.

Each joined the father's firm after graduation.

In 2001, Sheldon Flanzig went into semi-retirement, leaving his children to manage and lead the firm, which they reorganized as Flanzig and Flanzig LLP.

But while dad was no longer in charge, some of his beliefs left a mark on his kids.

Daniel, for instance, said the most important thing he learned from his father is that an attorney can be a highly effective advocate for the client and still be a respectful and courteous gentleman – what he calls "a lost art" in the legal arena. If an adversary requests an

adjournment and it won't hurt the client, for example, Sheldon believes the request should be honored.

The duo also said there are great advantages to working side by side with a sibling. Hidden agendas and power plays don't exist.

"It's great working with my sister because there's a trust there and we're working toward the same goal," Daniel said.

And bearing the Flanzig surname has its benefits, Cathy said. The family name is a valuable asset to be protected and guarded, she said. "It's about practicing law, quality law."

The firm also is focusing on extending its reach beyond Nassau and into the entire metropolitan area. Already, about half of Flanzig and Flanzig's clients come from the five boroughs. The firm, which employs six paralegals and expects to add an associate soon, also has small offices in Manhattan and Queens.