

Q & A

Q & A with Lee Silver



A native of Indiana, Lee Silver is one of the founding partners of the Silver & Van Essen law firm in Grand Rapids, Michigan. A two-time state champion in debate during high school, Silver earned a scholarship to the University of Redlands in southern California. He received his law degree from the Indiana University School of Law. He and his wife, Julia, have four daughters and seven grandchildren.

Q: Before becoming an attorney, what was your first job?

A: My first job was being a lifeguard at a hotel during the summer between my graduation from high school and starting college.

Q: What motivated you to pursue a legal career?

A: I am not sure why, but I have always wanted to be a trial lawyer for as long as I can remember. My parents use to tell me they thought it was because we would always watch “Perry Mason” as a family most nights after dinner.



At a family wedding in the resort community of Lake Tahoe several years ago, Lee Silver and his wife, Julia, are pictured with their four daughters (l-r), Tiffany, Maddie, Ellen, and Tabitha.

Q: Who was your chief mentor and how did he or she influence your career?

A: Most people are very fortunate if they have one really good mentor during their career. I was incredibly lucky enough to have two excellent mentors—John Anding and Jack Buchanan. John was my mentor for the first seven years of my practice at the firm that I started at after graduating law school. Jack was my mentor for seven or eight years when I joined his firm as a seven-year lawyer. They both are exceptional trial lawyers and I was able to observe not only the skills that made them exceptional trial lawyers, but also how hard they prepared for everything, including depositions, hearings, and trials. This taught me that no matter how much skill or talent you have, there is no substitute for being prepared and knowing the case better than anyone else in the courtroom. This is just one example of the valuable lessons I learned from them. I could probably write a book on everything that I learned from John and Jack.

Q: What’s the best piece of advice you’ve ever received?

A: Find a career that you are passionate about because it is not only a lot easier to excel at something that you are passionate about, but life is so much more enjoyable when you have a job that you love doing.

Q: What is one thing you would like to learn to do?

A: Fly fish.

Q: What is your proudest career achievement?

A: Earning the respect of many of my peers.

Q: What other career path might you have chosen?

A: Something to do with sports, either a sports broadcaster, sports radio talk show host, or an agent.

Q & A with Lee Silver

Q: What is your most treasured material possession?

A: Family photographs of our children when they were young.

Q: What is your happiest childhood memory?

A: Playing baseball with all the neighborhood kids.

Q: What is your favorite movie and book?

A: Movie: "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid."
Book: "A Civil Action."

Q: What is the most awe-inspiring place you have visited?

A: Longboat Key, Florida. It may not be "awe-inspiring," but it's one of my favorite places to go and relax.

Q: What are your favorite leisure time pursuits?

A: Doing anything with our daughters and grandchildren, going on walks every night with my wife and our two dogs, binge watching a great TV series with my wife, and watching Bears games.

Q: What is your favorite famous or inspirational quote?

A: I have two favorite quotes and they are both from Warren Buffett: "Basically, when you get to my age, you'll really measure your success in life by how many of the people you want to have love you actually do love you."

"It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you'll do things differently."

Q: Who is on your guest list for the ideal dinner party?

A: Warren Buffet, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Bill Gates, and Albert Einstein.

Q: What are the top three items on your bucket list?

A: I know it sounds weird, but I honestly don't have a bucket list



The Silvers with their grandson, Henry, one of their seven grandchildren.