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Eckelkamp Kuenzel Law Firm Celebrates 30 Years

■ Kuenzel Says Partners Are Friends First

By Josh Mitchell
 Missourian Staff Writer

Washington law firm Eckelkamp Kuenzel, LLP is celebrating 30 years of partnership.

The firm started Jan. 1, 1984, and is now looking forward to a new generation of service.

Managing partner Steven P. Kuenzel Sr. said it is the oldest law firm in Washington.

"We take pride in rendering great service to our clients," Kuenzel said. "We have a lot of long-term relationships."

The firm was originally established as Eckelkamp, Eckelkamp, Wood and Kuenzel and remained that way until Gael B. Wood was elected a circuit judge.

The original partners were Louis B. Jr. and William W. Eckelkamp, Kuenzel and Wood.

Once Wood left, the firm's name changed to its current name of Eckelkamp Kuenzel, LLP.

Since then, Louis B. Jr.'s son, Louis B. "Buzz" Eckelkamp, has joined the firm as a partner.

Kuenzel explained that during law school he and Wood clerked under Louis B. Jr. and William Eckelkamp.

In 1983, Louis B. Eckelkamp Sr. passed away. At that point, William and L.B. Jr. realized they needed to get more involved in the family businesses, including the Bank of Washington.

It was then that the new law firm was

formed, and it is now celebrating three decades in business.

Kuenzel noted that his family and the Eckelkamps go back a long way, adding that his dad was a vice president of the Bank of Washington.

The family connections continue today with new generations. Kuenzel noted that his daughter-in-law, Colleen, and his son, Steven Jr., have since joined the firm.

William and L.B. Eckelkamp Jr. have decreased their involvement in the firm, which was always the plan, Kuenzel said.

"More recently, Buzz Eckelkamp has become the president of the Bank of Washington and devotes almost his full time to that business," Kuenzel said.

Kuenzel said the firm has always been strong in the litigation area and also has a heavy emphasis on representing banks and in the area of financial transactions.

The practice of law has changed since the firm began because society has become much more litigious, Kuenzel said. There is also more paperwork these days, he noted.

There are more lawsuits now, people want to fight more and there is just more animosity in society in general, Kuenzel added.

Kuenzel graduated from the University of Missouri School of Law as did William and L.B. Eckelkamp Jr.

Buzz Eckelkamp graduated from Notre Dame Law School.



Law Firm Marks 30 Years

The Washington law firm of Eckelkamp Kuenzel, LLP recently celebrated 30 years. Front row from left are Steven P. Kuenzel Sr., William W. Eckelkamp, L.B. Eckelkamp Jr. and Louis B. "Buzz" Eckelkamp III. Back row from left are Steven P. Kuenzel Jr., Colleen M. Kuenzel and James W. McGettigan Jr.

Submitted Photo.

Kuenzel's son and daughter-in-law are St. Louis University School of Law graduates.

Kuenzel attributes the firm's success to the fact that the partners are friends first.

He said William and Louis B. Jr. molded him and Wood, and now Kuenzel says he has brought up the next generation at the firm with his son, daughter-in-law and Buzz.

Kuenzel's son was recently made a partner in the firm, and it is expected that William W. Eckelkamp Jr. will join the firm next fall when he graduates from the University of Missouri School of Law.

"We hope we are starting to train another generation here," Kuenzel said.

He also praised the "outstanding" staff the firm has had over the years.

The firm serves in Franklin, Gasconade and Warren counties and also serves by special arrangement in St. Charles, Crawford, Jefferson, Osage, St. Louis County and the city of St. Louis.

It works in the areas of personal injury, general civil practice, estate planning, trusts, DWI, family law, criminal law and corporations and business entities.

The firm is a life member of the Million Dollar Advocates Forum, which is for "the most prestigious groups of trial lawyers in the United States."

Eckelkamp Kuenzel, LLP also prides itself on community and civic involvement with organizations such as Boy Scouts, the volunteer fire department and the St. Louis Area Heart Association.