

**FINDING JOY IN THE PRACTICE OF LAW -
RECLAIMING YOUR LAW SCHOOL DREAM**

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

EDUCATION:

B.A. in Economics with Honors, St. Mary's University, 1964
J.D., The University of Texas, 1967

PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS:

Thirty year trial lawyer - Board Certified in family law and criminal law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization
Certified professional coach specializing in coaching lawyers and other professionals on top performance, career resilience and quality of life issues.
Former Chairman of State Bar of Texas Grievance Committee, District 6A
Grievance Oversight Committee of Supreme Court of Texas
Texas Academy of Board Certified Family Law Specialists
Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association
Former Chairman, District 6A State Bar of Texas Professionalism Enhancement Program
College of the State Bar of Texas
Board of Directors, Texas Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers
Board of Directors, International Alliance of Holistic Lawyers
Co-Founder and Past President, Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers of Dallas
Texas Lawyers' Assistance Program Committee
Peer Assistance Committee of Dallas Bar Association
Texas, American and Dallas Bar Associations

LAW RELATED ACTIVITIES, LECTURES, AND PUBLICATIONS:

Author/Speaker for the State Bar of Texas Professional Development Program 1987-1999
Course Director, "The Complete Lawyer: Mastering Your Law Practice and Your Life," March 1993
Frequent lecturer and author on legal and quality of life topics at Continuing Education Programs of attorneys, law schools, physicians, dentists, nurses, etc.
Participant in various panel discussions, symposiums, and radio and television talk shows relating to legal and quality of life issues
Drafted disability provisions of rules of disciplinary procedure of State Bar of Texas
Miscellaneous activities relating to rehabilitation and representation of impaired professionals

AWARDS/RECOGNITION:

State Bar of Texas Service Award 1988
State Bar of Texas Presidential Citation 1991
Texas Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers Ralph A. Mock Lifetime Contribution Award 1995
Selected as one of Dallas' top six divorce lawyers in "*D*" Magazine - May 1995

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By John V. McShane⁸

1. **Introduction.** The good news is that the practice of family law is not necessarily stressful. The bad news is that most of us (the author included) act and react in ways which cause us mental, physical and emotional distress while practicing family law. Since the stress is in us rather than something external, this paper focuses on the area of our lives in which we have maximum control - taking care of ourselves! Ask yourself this question: "What is most important to me at this time in my life?" Your answer will probably include one or more of the following: God, family, service to fellow man, health, success, prosperity, peace, happiness, etc. These are all noble values and worthy of our aspirations. However, we must make care of ourselves a top priority to maximize our chances of obtaining and maintaining the things that are important to us.

2. **Self-Care Distinguished from Selfishness.** Selfishness involves pathological self-absorption. It is evidenced by a "me first" attitude wherein one seeks to advance his or her cause with little or no regard for the rights of others. Selfishness is the antithesis of having a loving and generous spirit. On the contrary, self-care is the ultimate act of love and generosity. The foundation of love of others has to be a healthy love of self. In other words, if you don't love yourself, you can't love others.

3. **The "Poisoned Pie" Theory.** To be a healthy, happy, high-functioning human being, it is necessary to have balance and harmony in six life areas: (1) physical; (2) spiritual; (3) emotional; (4) professional; (5) financial; and (6) relationships. Significant imbalance or disharmony in any of these areas will eventually taint the others. This is illustrated by the "poisoned pie" theory. Imagine a pie with one section representing each of the major life areas as follows: