

Jack Swerling: Local attorney heads South Carolina's "dream team"

By Richard A. Wright

PROFESSIONAL SPOTLIGHT

In the United States, there are hundreds of thousands of laws. Lawyers usually specialize in one area of law because there is so much to know about that specialty that they must devote their whole career to understanding it. Jack B. Swerling is an active trial and appellate lawyer in the field of criminal law. Nobody understands this specialty better.

There was a time when lawyers could handle their cases with only the help of a secretary to type, file, and answer the telephone. Now, the most successful attorneys, including Swerling, have associates who help work on the cases. Swerling has lawyer associate Sandy Dasser, two paralegal associates, two secretaries, and his own private investigator.

His paralegals do legal research, prepare documents for use with clients, gather information about a problem, and in some situations deal directly with the client or with other people involved in the legal problem, such as witnesses.



Jack Swerling

Patty Williamson is one of the paralegal associates working with Swerling. Where a paralegal once did only research and secretarial work, now the tasks include investigating, research and preparations for the trials.

"I make sure that we have everybody ready for the trial—making sure

all the memos and files are up to date and checking out all the leads," says Williamson. She spends much of her time visiting with the clients and updating or reviewing the clients for the trial.

The team-work maintained in Swerling's office is not exclusive only to those who can pay expensive fees. He takes many of his cases pro bono—free of charge.

"Everybody is treated the same, no matter whether it is a big case or little case. The quality of representation in this office has nothing to do with the ability to pay the fee," says Swerling.

A recent case, where Swerling defended an Eau Claire student accused of murdering a fellow student, proves that top-rate legal council is not provided only for the wealthy elite such as O.J. Simpson.

Jack B. Swerling and his associates are located in downtown Columbia on Main Street across from the Richland County Courthouse. He welcomes any questions concerning legal issues.

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