



ATTORNEY SPOTLIGHT SERIES:

## **Attorney Dominic Donovan on Mission Statements & Law Firm Culture**

“I went to law school to do public interest work,” attorney Dominic Donovan explains. And upon graduation he accepted a position as guardian ad litem counsel in Ohio. “I loved the work and it was great litigation experience—but the burnout was real.”

Donovan shifted to **Legal Aid of the Bluegrass**, in a role he describes as very rewarding, with a lot of autonomy, surrounded by great people. But Donovan believed that the time was right to enter private practice and to continue his growth as a practitioner with public interest values.

Seeking a firm that both shared his values and offered that all-important mentorship he craved, Donovan discovered Kentucky-based **Landrum & Shouse LLP**—a litigation firm that handles a wide range of legal matters—through Partner Brad Hooks.

### **THE MISSION STATEMENT**

While doing his due diligence in advance of his interview, Donovan noticed that a **mission statement** appeared prominently on **Landrum’s website**. “The firm listed a series of values that the members promote and stand by,” he explains.

And it was clear the firm’s employees walked the walk, as Donovan discovered during his interview.

“They have those values packaged together and framed, so you see them right when you get off the elevator, front-and-center,” he describes.

In public interest law, Donovan says, values and people are really important. “As someone who was considering the shift from public to private practice, it was really important to find a firm with that same culture.”

Donovan explains that mentorship, ethics and culture were the three things he was primarily looking for. In the interview, Managing Partner Leslie Vose made it clear to Donovan that ethics are paramount and that he would be mentored by some of Kentucky’s best attorneys. And because they shared similar values, Donovan easily connected with the team’s leadership. Within a few weeks, the firm brought Donovan aboard as an Associate.

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## SERVANT LEADERSHIP

One of the founding principles of the firm was the concept of servant leadership. And Donovan makes it clear that those principles are carried out by the partners and associates. “The firm has embraced a culture of leadership, and really lived it,” he says. “They really give you that mentorship, that room to grow.”

And Donovan goes on to explain how everyone has a voice within the firm and regular town hall meetings allow everyone a chance to offer their insight. “The partners truly care and listen,” he states.

## WHY FIRM CULTURE IS A BIG DEAL

Every business, legal or not, felt the impact from the COVID-19 pandemic. Employers and employees were thrust into new, often difficult situations. From basic logistical hurdles to ensuring quality client service, law firms and attorneys adapted quickly to a rapidly changing environment.

Yet Donovan says it’s during those stressful times where a strong firm culture can really shine.

He recalls the outreach from the firm’s leadership team while working remotely. Partners would routinely call, sometimes just a simple check-in, but often there was a desire to see if there was anything that Donovan needed—ranging from technical support to childcare accommodations.

The leadership members even encouraged him and others to take days off to rejuvenate.

But the positive culture isn’t just about attorney morale. “I think it offers tremendous value and easily translates to quality of work,” Donovan reveals.

## PEOPLE MATTER

“When you’re young and looking for a place to grow,” Donovan says, “you’re really figuring out what matters to you.”

As it turns out, mentorship, ethics and culture really mattered to Donovan—and those qualities really matter to a lot of new and upcoming attorneys too.

“Coming from that public interest law background, I was concerned that I would end up at a place where I go and burn out.” Donovan says “it’s great to be part of a law firm that has a strong DNA around servant leadership.”

And Donovan stresses a broader importance here as well.

“People matter. I’m proud to be part of a firm that embraces that. But I don’t just want Landrum to be that, I want the local bar to reflect that, and I want the profession in general to be like that.”

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