



Illinois Attorneys McElwee and Reynolds Follow Different Paths to Mutual Success

If Matthew McElwee and Jared Reynolds had taken the advice of family, friends or even their peer attorneys, there might never have been an [RM Law Group LLC](#) in Chicago.

The two became friends at Chicago-Kent College of Law, then went their separate ways into good, stable jobs at established Chicago firms after graduation.

Even so, they still had in the backs of their minds a longer-term plan, and as it turned out, a pretty good one.

McElwee, who was doing venture capital and start-up work at a mega-firm, was enamored with the idea of building a small firm. And Reynolds, a personal injury attorney with Plaintiff and Defense experience, wanted to get back to focusing on the Plaintiffs' side.

So they brought their very different specialties together and started their own firm.



“We get a lot of questions because it doesn’t make sense at first glance to have a start-up corporate attorney and a personal injury litigator working side by side.”

McElwee understands why others might say their practices don’t naturally fit together, but to him and Reynolds, the combination made perfect sense.

“Our corporate practice tends to provide stable revenue for the firm,” said McElwee. “And Jared’s eventual contingent successes are top-line windfalls for the firm. So that was the motivation on the business side of things.”

“We’re sort of two separate firms under one roof in one sense,” Reynolds said, “but on the business side of things, the cashflow that Matt’s able to provide is very beneficial because we know we can budget for each month and plan for the year accordingly.

“That allows me to focus on bringing in cases that I know I may not resolve for a couple of years. If his side is doing well, we can invest in bigger and better cases on my side.

“I’m never at a point where I’m turning down a valuable case due to a fear of the costs needed to prosecute it. We can take on up-fronting those kinds of costs because of Matthew’s success.”

“On any given day, I’m helping a dozen different companies with a dozen different issues.”

McElwee loves the excitement of the unknown when he’s working with entrepreneurs.

“Start-up founders are probably the most exciting part of my job. They all have fantastic ideas. They’re all very driven. And they just make for great clients.

“Every day in this space is a chance to dig into new issues. It actually can make the practice of law exciting when you have interesting things to do on behalf of your clients.”

Of course, it helps both McElwee and his clients that he originally intended to be an entrepreneur himself.

“All of undergraduate, I was dead-set on entrepreneurship,” he said. “I’d started a few businesses while I was in college, one of which had a pretty significant dispute with a client for non-payment. I had to engage a commercial litigator to hopefully retrieve some of the owed money.

“At the time, I’m a 20-something kid experiencing the legal system for the first time and the commercial litigator I was working with was phenomenal. And that immediately clicked in for me. There had to be some intersection between entrepreneurship and the law where I can do that for clients and let them focus on doing what they want to do.”

McElwee’s love for working with others to explore options and opportunities has also strengthened his bond with Reynolds, who specializes in cases involving nursing home abuse and neglect.

“It’s great being able to collaborate more than we ever imagined.”

No one ever said that law firm partners had to be friends. But according to Reynolds, it’s certainly working for them and their clients.

“On my end, I sue a lot of big companies,” Reynolds said. “They may have ten different entities, but I know that only one of them is really relevant. I can go to Matthew and ask, ‘hey, where is the money really at?’ He helps me pierce the corporate veil.”

And that kind of collaboration is a two-way street.

“Matthew will come to me and tell me a fact pattern for his client and ask, ‘How would you sue my client?’ Then he can reverse-engineer things to protect his clients from people like me.

“It’s a blast. Certainly there are times when we wish we could be in an office together throwing ideas off the wall and having that initial start-up feel, but we’re constantly on the phone together and video-chatting and on Slack™. There’s not a day that goes by that we’re not in constant communication.

“We’re doing this because we’re best friends,” said Reynolds. “We met in law school and we studied abroad in Scotland together and we’ve just always trusted each other.”

“I’m almost exclusively in Practice Guidance every day.”

Though the partners have very different practices, McElwee says they still benefit from the same LexisNexis® research advantage: Lexis®.

“My clerk and I use Lexis to dig up practice notes on newer areas of law,” says McElwee. “And we use it for precedent when we’re putting together drafts of agreements.

“And I know that Jared uses all the more litigation-focused services, the research. That’s foundational. But he’s recently been digging into some of the ancillary services as well, like public record searches.

“Jared’s been most excited about the judicial precedent analysis tool, where he can view all the decisions made by 17 judges in a particular court circuit and statistically analyze which way they lean on a certain issue. He’s made great use of those tools.”

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