

# GERALD MEYER

## Telling Client's Story During Litigation Is Key to His Success

by Ashley Mizuo



For Gerald P. Meyer, it was the narrative aspect of litigation that drew him into the law profession. That passion for finding and telling an interesting story drives his work at Molo Lamken LLP where he focuses on white collar criminal issues and business and appellate litigation.

“There’s always the opportunity to find an interesting story,” he says. “I think that’s really the best thing about being a litigator in a litigation practice.”

The 39-year-old partner is known for his ability to sift through complex issues and craft narratives in forms that are easy to digest.

Theodore T. Poulos, a name partner at Cotsirilos, Tighe, Streicker, Poulos & Campbell, Ltd., noticed this quality when he worked with Meyer as co-counsel on a complicated federal healthcare fraud trial in Chicago.

“He had an impressive ability to analyze and digest a large volume of complex data, sift through it, organize it and understand it. He was able to present it in a concise, very easy to understand way. He’s got a great analytical mind,” Poulos says. “He’s a fabulous writer. He just has an innate ability to write.”

### EARLY CAREER SHIFTS

Meyer grew up in Houston and began pursuing his undergraduate career at the University of Texas at Austin. He later transferred to Azusa Pacific University in California where he graduated in 2004.

Upon Meyer’s graduation, he and his wife Lorilin were looking for what came next. For Meyer, an English major, it was law.

“A lot of the skills you develop are reading, writing, and research and figuring that kind of stuff out,” he says. “So, when I was thinking about how I wanted to apply those skills and moving forward outside of undergrad, law seemed like a pretty good fit.”

Both he and his wife wanted to leave the West Coast, so they jumped at the opportunity when they were both accepted at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. The university’s proximity to Chicago appealed to them as well.

“It was nice to be close enough to a big city that there would be employment opportunities and the like down the road,” Meyer says.

The year after graduating from the University of Illinois College of Law in 2009, he clerked for the late Judge Robert R. Beezer in the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Seattle.

As a law student, he was particularly interested in classes that centered on complex commercial issues. This interest led him to work as a transactional attorney at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP in Chicago where he represented clients in mergers and acquisitions, tax-exempt organization issues and other tax planning concerns.

His favorite part about transactional issues in law school was diving into antitrust issues, securities rules and tax rules—all of which are complex rule sets.

However, once he began practicing as a transactional attorney, he realized that something was missing. “The reality of that practice, for me, was a lot more transactional,” he says.

“What was really missing was the story. What drew me into litigation is the story and being able to craft a narrative around whatever happened, whatever’s gone wrong because when you’re in litigation, at some point, probably something went wrong.”

Meyer decided to do a second clerkship in Salem, Virginia, with Judge G. Steven Agee at the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to transition into a litigation role. For the next two years, he focused more on research and writing.

Then Meyer decided to start at Molo Lamken in 2014, where he made partner in 2018.

### WINNING IN THE SUPREME COURT

Although the case was already with Molo Lamken when Meyer joined the firm, he was able to work on a U.S. Supreme Court brief with Jeffrey A. Lamken, a founding partner of the firm, and a few other associates.

The case, *Jenny Rubin, et al. v. Islamic Republic of Iran* involved the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act. It was before the 7th Circuit when Meyer first got involved.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of Molo Lamken’s client almost unanimously, 8-0. Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan was recused from the case, and Justice Sonia Sotomayor delivered the opinion on behalf of the court.

“The amount of work that goes into a Supreme Court brief, the amount of thought that goes into it and the amount of detail you put into your arguments are unlike anything else,” Meyer says. “It was, I think, the deepest dive you could possibly do into a statute.”

There were countless conference calls, brainstorming sessions and pages of reading on the Foreign Sovereign Immunity Act.

“This was something that had been a principle of international law long before it was a federal statute,” he says. “We were really doing a full historical analysis of the concept of foreign sovereign immunity and putting that all together for the court.”

Unlike a typical jury verdict where you are with your client when it’s delivered, Meyer was notified of the Supreme Court decision through an email.

“You’ll just get an email. That’s how you figure it out, so it’s a nice surprise. It’s like, ‘Oh, this is great!’” he says.

“Of course, you’re excited when you win a case, and you should be, but I think the real reward is in reading the decision and seeing which of your arguments the court latched on to, kind of seeing that you actually had a real impact on the case.”

#### CULTIVATING CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS

Meyer’s ability to cultivate strong relationships with clients is a frequent topic with his peers and colleagues.

When Steven F. Molo, a founding partner at Molo Lamken, was representing the former Speaker of the New York Assembly Sheldon Silver in a public corruption trial in Manhattan, he scheduled a lengthy healthcare fraud trial only a few months later. He turned to Meyer to help prepare the healthcare fraud case for trial.

“He did not just do everything that was asked of him, but he went above and beyond,” says Molo.

“He ended up cross-examining five or six witnesses at this lengthy healthcare fraud trial as a mid-level associate at the firm. That’s a big thing to do. It was a testament to his hard work and the great rapport he built with the client.”

One of Meyer’s first and most significant cases was representing a Chicago physician who was being prosecuted under a federal anti-kickback statute. Meyer was able to cultivate a strong relationship with the client during the legal process.

“Being in that position, representing him, you really get to know him as a person and get to know his family,” Meyer says. “You get to understand his story.”

In that case, a for-profit hospital was under investigation by the federal government for paying kickbacks and bribing physicians to refer patients, where their services were

reimbursed by Medicaid and Medicare. Meyer’s client was one of the physicians.

“Just getting to know him and his family was very, very interesting,” Meyer says. “He was an immigrant from India. He really built his practice up from virtually nothing and became a very successful physician.”

The anti-kickback statute the client was being prosecuted under requires intent.

“It requires that you know what you’re doing is illegal and that you do it anyway. I really don’t think that was the case,” Meyer says.

Meyer explains that when lawyers represent someone who is being criminally prosecuted, it is their job to guide the client through the process.

“It’s really up to you, as an attorney, to be there for your client and help them navigate that process in a way that’s going to be minimally disruptive to their family and really try to help them come to terms with what’s going on,” he says. “Their world has been turned upside down. By the time they’ve been indicted, it’s very, very hard.”

“He brings out the best in those he works with because he gives them a chance to shine while teaching them how.”

#### COORDINATING FIRM’S PRO BONO WORK

At Molo Lamken, Meyer coordinates the pro bono activities for the whole firm. He communicates with the different organizations that may need attorney services and organizes splitting up those efforts between the lawyers at the firm.

These cases run a wide range of issues from immigration and family law to appeals for veterans’ benefits. The pro bono services also extend to circuit court proceedings for appointed counsel which are usually habeas petitions, civil rights cases or criminal appeals.

In 2018, under Meyer’s coordination, Molo Lamken won the Seventh Circuit Bar Association’s Pro Bono and Public Service award that recognized the firm’s pro bono work in the 7th Circuit. That year, the firm took 12 pro bono appellate appointments circuit and contributed on average over 100 pro bono hours per lawyer.

Megan Church, a partner at Molo Lamken who works closely with Meyer, has had a front-row seat to his efforts while working on pro bono cases.

“Gerald is a real leader in our office. He runs the entire law firm’s pro bono program. And as part of that, he’s always looking for

opportunities to help get in-court experience for associates and even for some of the partners,” she says. “He’s also a guy who just goes above and beyond, not only for his clients but also for his coworkers.”

Meyer’s most recent pro bono case was representing a prison inmate who had dental work done in prison that resulted in the loss of two teeth. The inmate sued the warden of the prison and the dentist who operated on him under the Section 1983 civil rights law.

“We filed an amended complaint for him, went and visited him, and really got to know him,” says Meyer. “We did everything we could to tell his story and really tell how he had been treated badly.”

Church explains that last year, she and Meyer were working back-to-back trials, one of which was a pro bono case.

“He took each trial incredibly seriously, but he also had fun in the process,” Church says. “He gave the associates on both cases a great opportunity to question witnesses. He brings out the best in those he works with because he gives them a chance to shine while teaching them how. It’s because he’s such a strong lawyer.”

Meyer sees being on trial as one of the more challenging but interesting aspects of being a lawyer.

“It’s a ton of work, and it’s also a very emotional experience because you’re fully invested,” he says.

Meyer explains that while it is a high-stress work, parts of the trial process can be incredibly dry, especially with witnesses who are less engaging. However, through the whole process, the key is to stay focused.

“You’re really at that counsel table coiled up, ready to strike the whole time,” he says. “You’re spending all of your time on this case, once it’s on trial, and that means putting every other part of your life on hold.”

Meyer explains that during trial he really relies on his wife for support.

“My wife is incredible,” he says. “When I’ve had trials, my wife really kind of takes over the house, takes care of the kids and takes care of everything else that’s going on in our lives. It’s a ton of work, and I wouldn’t be able to do what I do if she wasn’t there.”

Meyer and his wife have three young children. “They’re incredible kids with just a ton of energy,” he says. “They keep my wife and me very busy, in a good way.”

In what little free time Meyer has, he likes to keep up with what’s going on with the Chicago Cubs. “When it’s not baseball season, I’m just looking forward to baseball season,” he jokes.

However, for his kids, it’s all about soccer. “I don’t have a baseball player yet,” he says. “I’m working on it.” ■