



2022 Industry Leaders: Robert Banner, Ingram Yuzek Gainen Carroll & Bertolotti, LLP

September 27, 2022 - Spotlights



Nominee's Name & Job Title: Robert Banner, Partner, Department Head, Construction & Design

Nominee's Company/Affiliation: Ingram Yuzek Gainen Carroll & Bertolotti, LLP

Nominee's City & State of Employment: 150 East 42nd Street, FL-19, New York, NY 10017

What was the most difficult experience you have encountered as a leader?

The loss of two excellent lawyers from our group over the last ten or so years. For the most part our firm and our group has talented people that stay for a very long time. What made the loss of these two lawyers difficult was the very close personal bond I had with each of them. At the time I had to acknowledge that the opportunities they were looking at, all things considered, might have been in their best interests to pursue and at that time I did not have the ability to offer them what I thought would have been needed to retain them. Each of them wrote me very long handwritten notes thanking me for my mentorship and honesty. Both are doing very well and I see them both often to this day—but all these years later I still would like to have them working with us.

What advice would you give the next generation of leaders in your industry?

Our industry is dynamic, hard driving and ever-changing. The best advice for the next generation of leaders is to surround themselves with people of diverse backgrounds and skills that are as talented and conscientious as possible. Then give those who report to you as much responsibility and credit as possible consistent with reality. Finally, to step back and look at all situations from multiple points of view- especially from the point of view of those who report to you. Many people rise to leadership roles based on extremely hard work and ambition but once you arrive different skills are required for effective leadership. Making the people that report to you look good and feel heard is an essential part of next generation leadership. I for one think the next generation of leaders and workers work just as hard and care just as much as their predecessors- they just manifest their commitment in different ways that need to be explored and understood.

Describe what you would consider to be ONE of your top career highlights:

I have done many jury trials for matters large and small. One in particular stands out. A client in a small firm had given wrong advice to a developer who purchased a site allegedly relying on the advice of what could be developed on the site. The advice was flat out wrong and our client was sued for many millions based on lost development rights. However the advice and the purchase all happened very quickly and there were circumstances to explain why the wrong advice was given. If the client lost, it would have been out of business and there was a chance of a personal bankruptcy as well. All this near the end of an unblemished distinguished career by the principal of the company. Without going into details, after a strong cross examination of the plaintiff the case was starting to look like there was a chance for a good result on damages even if the jury found negligence. Then Hurricane Sandy struck and the trial judge told the jurors they had the option to be relieved of their jury duty service if they liked since it was unclear when the trial would be resumed. In NYC, this is a get out of jail free pass. Amazingly all of the jurors committed to returning when the trial resumed—and did. Ultimately their verdict was no negligence. The deep gratitude of the client was of course rewarding. However what makes this a career highlight was the sense that these

jurors were invested in the saga and wanted to see it through and do the right thing.

What award were you most proud to receive?

The Milbank Tweed most valuable player award on their softball team many years ago. For someone like me, a mediocre athlete at best, it made me quite happy.

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