

Ask a Busy Person

Investment Protector

Getting To Know Scott Eriksen

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WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP?

I'm still figuring it out – but it wasn't being a condominium lawyer. I sort of fell into this career, and I think I was very fortunate to have done so. My father is a real estate developer, so I always thought that I might do something in the real state arena. When I first started my practice, I was working in a large Boston law firm doing estate planning for high net-worth individuals. It was a good starting place, but it wasn't where I wanted to be long term. I left there after a few years and eventually found my way to Perkins & Anctil and discovered that community association law is just a great fit for me.



WHY IS THAT?

I like the variety. The role is sort of general counsel for the hundreds of associations that we represent, and in that capacity, we get to do all different things. It's often transitional work, there's a governance aspect to it, and there's enough litigation to keep it engaging. And, of course, a very large part of it is dealing with people. Each association is kind of a microcosm of municipal government in that you have people living together with common interests, being financially tied to each other, and having to respect a common set of rules and governance. In the United States, most people's most significant financial investment is their home, and that's no different for condominium owners. So, I think that, at the end of the day, it's in

everyone's best interest to promote and protect that investment. I see our role as community association counsel as assisting with that objective.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE BENEFITS OF CAI?

CAI is a phenomenal resource – locally, nationally, and beyond. As I say, folks serving on condominium boards are volunteers. Many may not have experience serving in this role, and I think CAI does a great job of making education for board members accessible and really covering all the basics. Also, for me, one of the neat things about being involved in CAI is that we become friendly with individuals who are really our competitors. It builds a sense of camaraderie.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS SOME OF THE CHALLENGES FACING THE INDUSTRY NOW?

Some of the biggest challenges facing the industry right now, I think, are already emerging from the tragedy that happened at the Surfside condominium in Florida. I think it awakened everybody's concern about deferred maintenance and safety. I think we're going to see more legislation, more guidance come down over the next few years to address those concerns. Another perennial issue over the past five years



or more is handling assistance animals. It's something boards wrestle with quite frequently. If you have restrictions in your condominium documents that prohibit or limit pets, there are times you have to make exceptions to that, and many boards that I work with have legitimate concerns about how to make the right decisions for their communities when it comes to these requests.

WHAT'S THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONDOMINIUM LAW AND OTHER LEGAL SPECIALTIES?

I would say it's working with volunteers who are really committed to their neighbors. You have all of these community associations-some of which are pretty large and have perhaps hundreds of thousands or even a million dollars under their management-and they're run by volunteers. Board members do not get paid for their service and they have lives, and yet they are willing to manage their communities, maintain common assets, and promote harmony. It's no small undertaking. So, I'm always impressed with that-the idea that so many individuals are willing to dedicate their time toward bettering their communities.



WHAT WOULD IT SURPRISE PEOPLE TO KNOW ABOUT YOU?



It might surprise people to know that I fenced for the University of Pennsylvania and was a two-time All-American. I started fencing when I was 12 years old, and I competed nationally and internationally in high school before competing at Penn.

WHAT DO YOU DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME NOW?

I love to travel with my family. We've been fortunate to go on some pretty good trips over the past few years despite COVID. We made it up to Acadia recently, and we're hoping to go out West to ski this year. We're big skiers.



WHAT'S THE BEST ADVICE YOU'VE GOTTEN?

My father always says, “Nothing good comes easy.” It’s a simple principle, and I try to impress that upon my children. You need to work for positive results, whether in your personal life, career, sports, school, whatever. Ten years of condominium practice has made me a much better condominium lawyer, but it’s not over. I think that you’ve got to be open to that, and you’ve got to be willing to work at getting better every day.

