



About Our Honoree



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The Peggy Browning Fund Honors

Hugh J. Beins

Hugh has recently retired from the firm of Beins Axelrod after 53 years of practicing labor law. He and Jon Axelrod practiced together for over 35 years. They were an odd couple – Hugh grew up in the Bronx and was an ardent Giants fan and Jon was raised in Brooklyn and worshipped the Dodgers.

Hugh came to Georgetown University on a basketball scholarship and wound up Captain of its 1953 NIT Team. He graduated from Georgetown Law Center in 1956 during which time he was the Assistant Basketball Coach at Georgetown under Hall of Famer Buddy Jeannette.

From 1957 to 1960, Hugh was a trial attorney with the NLRB in Boston, including details to Newark and DC. He tried many cases against employers and unions, including Geilich Tanning (Ike's Board at its worst), Ralph's Wonder Market (40 employees reinstated with full backpay); and Lexington Electric (18 employees reinstated with full backpay). He is proud of his NLRB roots, especially the very able and dedicated public servants in the Boston Region who taught him labor law. They were the "Cream of the Crop" who always sought to enforce the Act.

In 1960 Hugh became General Counsel of the Eastern Conference of Teamsters. In the 60's the Conference had 625,000 members. Its staff included 15 Representatives, each of whom represented a division, such as Freight. They were exceptionally well qualified and dedicated. Nobody ever successfully sued and collected one penny from the Conference during the 26 years that Hugh represented the Conference.

From 1960 to 1980 Hugh enjoyed many victories including the 19 week Gilbarco strike and boycott against Exxon (850 employees under contract in Greensboro NC); the Akers Central 301 Injunction in Charlotte which resulted in the largest settlement (\$1.6 million) in the history of the Teamsters; the Pilot Freight Mandamus against a Federal Judge in Winston-Salem; and the defense of eight of the first civil rights cases against the Teamsters which resulted in no back pay.



Hugh remained at the Conference until 1980 when he, Jon Axelrod and Bill Osborne formed a law firm. Since 1980, Hugh's victories included arbitrations against the Census Bureau (reinstatement and over \$100,000 in benefits); the Library of Congress (reinstatement and over \$500,000 in benefits), a double-breasted arbitration against Anchor Motor Freight (the culprit was General Motors); the NLRB case against D.C. Liquor Distributors which locked out its employees and paid some \$10 million in back pay; the Virginia Concrete strike in which the Union prevailed at the Board and in the Fourth Circuit; the CWI litigation involving a mass discharge of 38 employees; and the Yellow Bus RICO case. In 2003 Hugh became one of only five attorneys in history to receive the Teamsters Lawyers Conference Distinguished Service Award.

In addition to the practice of law, Hugh taught Labor Law at Georgetown Law for 30 years from 1961 to 1990. He received the Vicennial Medal in 1980 and the Fahy Award in 1990 as the Outstanding Adjunct Professor. Among his students were such notables as John Truesdale of NLRB fame and Roger Hartley of Catholic University Law School.

Hugh has lectured throughout the country, including at ABA conferences. He also wrote the original Hot Cargo chapter for Developing Labor Law. He has been a Fellow of the College of Labor and Employment Law since its inception in 1996.

Hugh strongly believes that the practice of law is devoted to problem solving. Communication between the parties usually results in a mutually agreeable collective bargaining agreement and relationship. Hugh believes that union lawyers are blessed by being able to advocate for social justice, but where, however, the employer only respects power, the Union must use power to achieve justice. He also believes that experience has taught us that the worst word in the English language is "Deregulation."

Hugh and his wife, Mary, have been married for 53 years. They have 7 children and 18 grandchildren. It is a very close knit family, thanks to Mary. Two of the children are lawyers. The others include teachers, computer gurus and a federal government worker. One works for Boeing at Cape Canaveral and is a member of the Machinists Union. The Grands' interests vary from basketball players to teacher, priest, astronaut, to nuclear engineer.

Hugh is proud to be a protégé of Father Philip Carey, S.J., the famed "labor priest" from New York City whose assistant, Father Corriden, S.J., was the "Waterfront Priest."

His hope for the labor movement is unity and a self-policing mechanism, Major League Baseball serving as a good precedent. He believes the movement's credibility and progress are at stake.