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Story in this issue

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Golden Valley attorney marks 50-years at law firm

by SUE WEBBER
Contributing Writer

On May 22, 2018, Allen Barnard marked his 50-year anniversary with Best & Flanagan law firm in Minneapolis.

It constituted his entire legal career, the first and only law firm for which he worked after receiving a Juris Doctor degree from Notre Dame.

"It's always been a really good firm with good people," said Barnard, a Golden Valley resident who now is giving retirement a whirl.

He got the job in Minneapolis days before he was to receive his law school diploma at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, Barnard said. "I had moved up here to start my job and my wife and baby daughter picked up my diploma," he said. "Then I flew back to Indiana and packed up a U-Haul for the trip to Minneapolis."

A native of North Dakota, Barnard said he's been working ever since he got a Social Security card when he was in the seventh grade and working at the concession stand at a drive-in theater. "I've been working and going to school ever since," he said.

He originally thought he'd become a doctor because he liked math and science. But once he got to college at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks, he decided he wanted to be a lawyer. He finished college in three years, graduated in August and started law school in September.

His wife-to-be, Andi, who was Barnard's high school sweetheart in Williston, North Dakota, went to St. Mary's College in Notre Dame, Indiana,



(PHOTO SUBMITTED)

Allen and Andi Barnard of Golden Valley pursue a variety of retirement activities.

since Notre Dame didn't admit women at the time. The couple lived in student housing.

During the summer of 1968, Barnard's first year with the law firm, he began doing some legal work for the city of Golden Valley. His then-partner, Bob Skare, was Golden Valley city attorney, and convinced Barnard to move from his apartment in Plymouth to Golden Valley. He and Andi are still living in the Golden Valley home they bought 45 years ago.

"I became Bob's chief assistant early on," Barnard said. "In 1977 or 1978, the city needed to start an HRA (Housing and Redevelopment Authority), so I researched that and helped

them create one. I became the HRA attorney."

In October 1968, he tried his first jury trial," Barnard said. "They were in the Crystal court house then. I spent a lot of time there. It was a good training ground for me. For three years I got to know the judges and learn my way around the court house. I got to know the cops."

"Part of my job was to prosecute misdemeanors," Barnard said. "I was in court all the time. I learned how to try cases."

One of the biggest Golden Valley cases he worked on was the Oliver Lyle case in 1969.

Oliver Lyle was a black

musician who played at what then was the Point Supper Club in Golden Valley. Lyle said he had been stopped nine times by Golden Valley police as he drove back and forth to work and claimed that his civil rights were violated as a result of unlawful searches, unlawful arrests, assaults, invasion of privacy, slander and libel, abuses of process, malicious prosecution, harassment and coercion.

Lyle ultimately sued the city, the city council and the police officers.

The jury subsequently found some council members and police officers liable at the end of the federal court case; the city was dismissed. Barnard recalls

that the late Ray Stockman, who later became a member of the city council, was part of a liberal Action Now group that sided with the cops.

One of the biggest Best & Flanagan cases Barnard recalls was Kelly v. Piper Jaffray, et al., a 10-week securities fraud class action trial that resulted in substantial recovery.

"It was a jury trial that we tried it in the spring of 1981, and we won," Barnard said. "We had 11,000 legal hours in the case."

Barnard became Golden Valley city attorney in 1988.

Barnard said he became an expert in zoning laws and started doing eminent domain work for the

Golden Valley HRA, as it began its redevelopment of downtown during the Valley Square project.

He also did some work for Hennepin County, Barnard said. "I dealt with MnDOT a fair bunch," he said.

He's still on call for some consulting work at Best & Flanagan, and still has an office at the firm. "The law firm has a policy of providing an office for any retiring lawyer who wants an office," he said, noting that includes "an up-to-date computer system constantly being kept up to snuff by full-time techs."

He won't be at a loss for activities to fill his retirement. One of Barnard's hobbies is researching investments for his self-directed retirement assets.

He and his wife built a home on Lake Superior's Madeline Island, where they enjoy sailing. They also are the property managers for a 135-acre farm with 1,600 feet of lakeshore near Detroit Lakes. There, they enjoy a pontoon, power boat, ATVs and riding trails through the woods.

"We go one direction one weekend, and the other direction the next weekend," he said.

He and his family, which includes daughter Alaina, son Aaron and four grandchildren, enjoy skiing as well.

Allen and Andi are involved in musical pursuits. For 30 years, Andi directed a singing group called Big Kids, in which Allen was a singer. A former music teacher, Andi now teaches private piano lessons.

The couple are big fans of local concerts and plays, as well as the Minnesota Orchestra and Guthrie Theater.

How do you know when clumsiness a cause for concern?

Who hasn't tripped over his own feet or knocked over a water glass on a table?

For healthy people, bumping into a wall when misjudging a corner or dropping silverware on the floor is often a minor, isolated incident. Lack of concentration or multitasking often may be to blame. In 2007, Professor Charles Swanik and a research

team at the University of Delaware studied athletes to discover why some seem to be more injury prone than others. Researchers found that clumsy athletes' brains seemed to have "slowed processing speed," which referred to how their brains understand new information and respond to it.

But clumsiness also can be a sign of a bigger issue at play,

namely motor problems within the brain. According to Taylor Harrison, MD, clinical instructor in the neuromuscular division of Emory University, coordination of the body is complicated and tied to both motor and sensory systems. That means the eyes, brain, nerves, cerebellum, which specializes in coordination and balance, muscles, and bones

must work together.

Clumsiness can result from stroke, seizure disorders, brain trauma or the presence of tumors, and other conditions. Healthline also says that clumsiness may be an early symptom of Parkinson's disease or Alzheimer's. Parkinson's affects the central nervous system and can impair motor skills. Alzheimer's slowly

damages and kills brain cells and may cause issues with coordination. This may be the case with other dementias as well.

Clumsiness may sometimes result from a lack of sleep or overconsumption of alcohol. Arthritis also can lead to clumsiness when joint pain and restrictive movements make it challenging to get around.

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Fridley will always be part of retiring IB coordinator's life

By **SUE WEBBER**

Contributing Writer

Carol Neilson said she always loved school.

"My teachers had a big impact on me," she said.

No surprise, then, that Neilson became a teacher herself. The surprising part is that she stayed at her first and only teaching location for 47 years.

But this fall, for the first time since 1972, Neilson isn't thinking about school supplies.

Neilson, International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme coordinator in the Fridley School District for the last 10 years, retired at the end of the 2017-18 school year.

As a student majoring in health and physical education at St. Cloud State University, Neilson did her three-month student teaching stint at Fridley Middle School. "When I finished that March, I went back to college," she said. "The first day of spring term, I got a call from Fridley saying a physical education teacher wouldn't be back in the fall. They wanted me to come in the next day and sign a contract.

"Jobs were pretty tough to come by then. I was in just the right place at the right time. I got to enjoy my senior year of college, knowing that I already had a job."

She taught physical education until 2007 when Fridley was authorized to offer the IB program and Neilson became involved.

In the fall of 2009, the MYP coordinator left to become a principal, and Neilson became MYP coordinator.

International Baccalaureate is an international education foundation founded in 1968 and headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

Through a continuum of international education, it encourages both personal and academic achievement, and challenges students to excel in their studies and in their personal development. It aims to develop inquiring,



(PHOTO SUBMITTED)

Carol Neilson retired this spring from her job as the Middle Years International Baccalaureate coordinator in the Fridley School District.

knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

It offers four educational programmes:

- PYP Primary Years Programme for children ages 3 to 12.

- MYP Middle Years Programme, designed for students aged 11 to 16 (grades 5-10).

- Diploma, the IB Diploma Programme for juniors and seniors

- Career IB, Career-related Programme for students aged 16 to 19 who want to explore industrial certification areas.

To teach these programmes, schools need to be authorized by the International Baccalaureate Organization.

Fridley Public Schools received authorization to offer the Middle Years Programme in 2007, the Diploma Programme in 2009, the Primary Years Programme in 2010 and the Career-related Programme in 2016.

All students at the elementary schools, middle

school and high school have access to the IB classes.

While all students at the high school take IB classes, students have to elect to be a part of the DP or CP Programmes. This year, 18 students became candidates for the Diploma Programme diploma. Fridley also had two Career-related Programme candidates. Twenty-six IB Scholars (students who took four or more IB diploma courses with external exams) graduated from Fridley this spring.

Fridley is one of only two school districts in the state—and one of very few in the country—that has all four programs.

"We are an all-IB district," Neilson said. "We offer the entire continuum. It's a really great thing."

Neilson is proud of how the Fridley community has grown since she began her teaching career there. "It's been fun to be part of that," she said. "When I started in 1972, there were six elementary schools and 400 students per grade level. Now there are a little over 200 stu-

dents per grade level.

"Our enrollment has changed. Our residents stayed after the kids grew up and moved out. Only 20 percent of the homes in our district have students in school."

"When Fridley first started, we had very little diversity," Neilson said. "Now we have such diversity. It's more like a microcosm of the world. It's so cool to learn from each other. It prepares kids for the future much better, and it fits the IB mission so well."

Being part of implementing IB programs at Fridley, Neilson said, has brought an appreciation for the school community's cohesiveness. "We know each other and we know our kids," she said. "The four coordinators work closely together."

The close-knit feeling made it very hard for her to decide to retire, she said.

"I really loved what I did," she said. "It's hard to leave something you really love. I had several sleepless months over the decision."

She acknowledges that the role of educators has changed a great deal.

"Teachers have become at-school moms and counselors because some kids are going through tough things," Neilson said. "It's more than learning. You're dealing with the whole person."

Her own view of teaching changed once she became a parent, Neilson said. "Then you're looking at things through the eyes of a parent, too," she said.

She won't be at a loss for activity in her retirement years, Neilson said.

Her daughter, Kirsten, a pediatric nurse practitioner at Wayzata Children's Clinic, is completing a Ph.D. program, and her son, Jeffrey, a data scientist at 3M, is being married in January 2019 in India.

One of Neilson's projects is sewing a bridesmaid dress for her daughter. Another will be to help her daughter with some home remodeling projects.

"I love remodeling," she said. "I'm doing a fair amount of work at my house. I love painting. And I love to garden."

She's part of a walking group, and she also is working out at a gym.

Neilson and her husband Larry, an attorney at Rooney & Neilson, Ltd., have been married for 43 years.

Neilson says she comes by her work ethic honestly. Her parents grew up in Swede Hollow, on the east side of St. Paul, and cultivated the Scandinavian hard-working ethic. Her dad was an electrician who had, as he said, "one job, one wife and one house" for his entire life. "He built the house in 1948 for \$10,000," Neilson said. "Mom lived there for 63 years, until she died at the age of 93."

Neilson was brought up with the ethic that people were expected to work hard and not to miss work. "My first three years of teaching, I missed just two days, when I had surgery on my foot," Neilson said.

When she retired, she left behind 350 sick days that she never used.

But she isn't leaving education behind entirely. Neilson is hoping to be able to work with the Fridley Foundation. "I want to be part of the community," she said. "It will always be part of my life. I will always be connected with Fridley."



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