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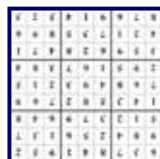
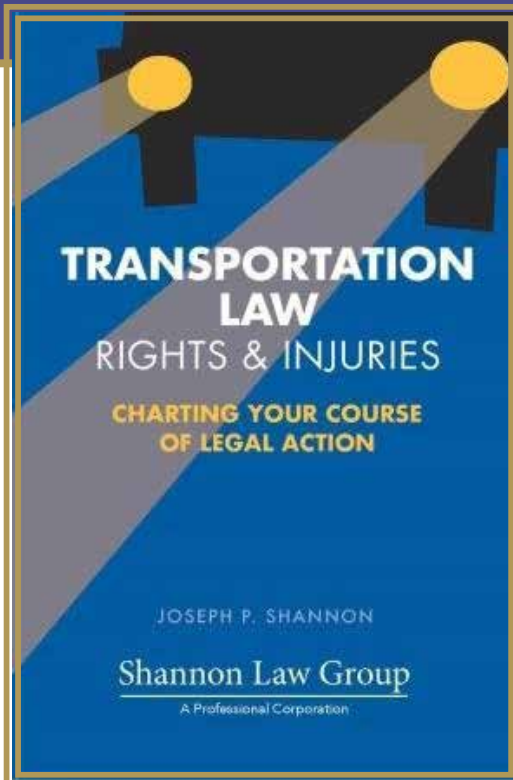
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PHIL NIGLIACCIO: AN INSPIRATION

— Living the American Dream —

For our March edition, I asked everyone at the firm to write about someone who inspires them. In past newsletters, I've written about family, friends, and community members who have inspired me over the years. Today, I want to highlight a pillar of our Chicagoland community: Philip Nigliaccio. Why do I highlight Phil? Because Phil and his family remind us what is good about America. Phil immigrated to America from Ciminna, a Sicilian city, when he was 20 years old. Ciminna is a mountaintop city with a vibrant culture centered on its annual festivals and religious processions. Phil best describes his journey:

My dad immigrated to Chicago in January 1965 with his parents and all of his siblings. When my dad's oldest sister got married and moved from Ciminna to Chicago, my grandfather insisted that this move would not split up his family. So he traveled with my aunt and uncle to Chicago, found a job, and earned enough money to afford to bring his wife and five other children to Chicago, too. By the time my dad's family received approval from the United States to immigrate, my grandfather had earned enough money to fly his family to Chicago on an airplane.

When I left Ciminna over 50 years ago, I knew I wanted to find a permanent home for myself and for my future generations in America. I found my home in Chicago. The name of my barber shop, Philip Di Ciminna, is a tribute to the place where I grew up, but there's no question that Chicago is my home. When I'm not at the shop, I enjoy spending time with my wife, Rose, my two kids, and six grandchildren. I try to attend as many of my grandkids' sports games as I can. I also appreciate the large number of great Italian restaurants in this city. In fact, it might be one of the reasons I've stayed here so long.

I first met Phil and his wife in the early 1990s. I walked into the Philip Di Ciminna Barber Shop steps away from city hall and the Daley Center. I instantly knew I was in the hands of a professional barber. I felt like I was part of the family there, and



I've been a regular ever since. Back in those days, Phil was cutting hair and Rose was polishing nails. Their life centered on their great marriage, their two daughters, their faith, and their spectacular barber shop. Over the years, Phil and Rose have become grandparents to six grandchildren. How do I know? Just check out the beautiful photos on the walls!

Folks like Phil and Rose inspire me, because I am continually inspired by people who take chances for a better life. Phil and Rose continue to live the American dream. This nation was built on the hope of a better life, the faith of our people, and the hard work of our immigrant families. They came to Chicago wanting a better life. Through their hard work, they have been running a terrific business for decades and employing a lot of talented barbers. There is an attitude of gratitude at Phil's barber shop.

Phil and Rose also brought the richness of their faith and culture with them. In December of 1995, Phil and his family walked away from a terrible car crash without any injuries. Believing they survived through the grace of God, Phil began the crusade to have a replica of the Holy Crucifix from his hometown in Ciminna made, bringing the tradition of the procession to Chicago. You may read more about Phil's dedication to his faith at chicagociminna.org. Suffice to say, Phil and his family are making a difference in the lives of anyone who visits Philip Di Ciminna Barber Shop and those at Maryville Academy in Des Plaines who are involved in the Società Santissimo Crocifisso and San Giovanni Bosco di Ciminna Chicago, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the religious welfare of the Italian community in Chicagoland.

Philip Di Ciminna Barber Shop is located at 175 N. Wells St. in Chicago. They always answer the telephone at 312-263-4930.

-Joe Shannon

When I think of the qualities I look to emulate in other people, I think of hard work, selflessness, and the love of family. I consider these to be foundational qualities. I am blessed to have known many people throughout my life who possess these qualities, but one person in particular was my grandfather, Donald Svitak.

Born and raised in Berwyn, Illinois, he graduated from Fenwick High School (later, my father would graduate there, too). He would go on to serve in WWII as a member of the U.S. Air Force before being honorably discharged. After the war, he received a Bachelor of Science degree from the Division of Special Services for War Veterans at the University of Illinois in 1948.

In 1949, he married my grandmother, Becky, and they settled back in Riverside, Illinois. Seven kids later, my grandfather had started a successful Buick dealership in Berwyn, and he even served as president of the Chicago Automobile Dealers Association. Some of you in the area may remember the name Svitak Buick, which later became Castle Buick. He worked extremely hard to provide for his

growing family. Based on the stories I've heard from my father, he ran a tight ship.

I was the firstborn in my family; my grandparents were my first babysitters. My grandfather showed my siblings and me the same love and affection my dad had known as a kid. What I always appreciated, and still do, was that he treated us as adults. Other than my own parents, my sense of responsibility came from my grandfather. There was never a task or job that was too big, especially when it came to helping my family.

Having left their mark in Chicago, my grandparents decided to follow my Uncle Don out to Fort Collins, Colorado, to retire. There, he regularly welcomed his seven kids and 17 grandchildren for visits throughout the year. He continued to beat me in golf well into his 70s, no matter how much further I could hit the ball off the tee. For his 80th birthday, the entire family made it out to Fort Collins for a celebration. Shortly after turning 85, and right before his 60th wedding anniversary, my grandfather passed away peacefully in his home.



Donald and Becky Svitak, 1988

The life and legacy my grandfather built is reflected now in his family. I am inspired by his service to his country, his dedication to his education and work, the countless sacrifices he made for his children, and the love he showed each member of his widespread family. He's taught me to take advantage of life's opportunities, many of which I have because of him. Most importantly, he's taught me how to live and work for others. As my family continues to grow, I can think of no better source of inspiration than my grandfather.

Jonathan Svitak

THE DONINI SISTERS: PILLARS OF SUPPORT

The people who had the greatest impact on my life are the Donini sisters: Frances, Helen, and Kit (my mother). Their story, and how they lived by putting their sisters and family first, colored my world growing up and still blends into my family's life today.

My mom and her sisters were born to Italian-American immigrants in the 1920s. When my mom was only 9 months old, their father, Ubaldo, was killed. Her mother, Nellie, had no one to turn to and could not afford to keep her three daughters. She was forced to place them in an orphanage in southern Illinois, where they stayed for seven years.

This orphanage does not bring back fond memories for the Donini sisters, but Fran, the oldest, remembers doing everything she could to keep them together during that time. When my grandma was able to provide for them, she brought them back home. Life was difficult as a single mom during the Depression; she worked long, hard hours, and her daughters were left alone with only one another's company.

Growing up with four sisters of my own, I remember my mom often telling us, "Be nice to each other, because at the end of the day, all you have is each other." We would roll our

eyes at her, but to my mom and her sisters, it was the truth. They never had much growing up, but they had each other. As I grow older, I know now what strong support systems sisters can provide, and I am so grateful that I have them.

My aunts, Fran and Helen, were both unique characters in the vein of an Anne Tyler novel. Fran never met a stranger and has more friends and "adopted" family members than anyone I know. It is inspiring how she enjoys being around people and making friends, even becoming lifelong friends with someone she sat next to on a plane.

Helen was like a kid herself, always wanting to play games and laugh with us. We have great memories of watching Miss Universe pageants with her and making necklaces out of Doublemint gum wrappers. They both attended all of my sisters' and my school programs, birthday parties, and holidays; the flashes of the instamatic cameras always let us know they were there.

My mom was an unbelievable mother, especially in light of the fact that she didn't really have a model to follow, as her own mom was unable to be with her when she was young. She was a person that did not need



Donini Sisters

material things; rather, she got joy from giving us a safe, loving, and fun home. She made our lives rich by giving us the Donini sisters. My sisters and I always knew that our true family extended beyond our immediate family to include my aunts' families as well. A birthday celebration wasn't quite complete until you saw the aunts' cars pull into the driveway.

That sense of "completeness" carries on to the next generation. My children are happiest when they are with all of their cousins, aunts, and uncles, most likely jammed into the smallest room of my mother's house.

Now that the matriarchs are in their 90s, I look at our big growing family and see their influence everywhere. I realize how lucky we are to have had them so long, and I am glad that *they* have been able to witness how their lives and love for each other have been emulated by generations of their family.

Kate Refine

DAN CUMMINGS: SHOWING UP AND INSTILLING IMPORTANT VALUES

When Joe asked us to write this month's article on someone we admire, my mind went in a thousand different directions. I've been blessed to have so many terrific and inspiring people in my life whom I strive to emulate every day. The person I've elected to highlight this month is my old man, Dan Cummings.

First, I'd like to share a little bit of family history. My dad's maternal grandparents, Patrick Walsh and Rosemary Slattery, immigrated to America from Ireland's County Mayo at the tail end of the 1920s. His mom grew up on Orchard Street, in the shadow of St. Clement's Church in Lincoln Park, which is about a 10-minute walk from where my wife and I now live. Ultimately, his parents, Don Cummings and Maureen Walsh, married, started a family, and began raising their kids in west suburban Bellwood.

My dad's education followed a traditional Irish Catholic path, attending St. Simeon Elementary School in Bellwood, Fenwick High School ('79), and earning his bachelor's degree in political science from Illinois Benedictine College (affectionately referred to as "Itty Bitty College"). From there, he went on to attend John Marshall Law School full time, while also working for my grandparent's newsstand at the Chicago Board of Trade.

For the last 32 years, he has worked as a criminal defense attorney — both for the

public defender and in private practice. Growing up, I always had an affinity for the type of work he did. To me, there is great honor in being the only cornerman for someone against the entire might of the government.

While proud of his career, my dad would tell you that above all, he is a husband and a father — and I can confirm that he's good at both. As a husband, he has been a master at compromise, loyalty, and balancing humility and strength. Don't get me wrong — he's not always right on everything marital. It took him years to figure out that my mom's idea of a perfect Mother's Day wasn't freezing away in the seats of Comiskey Park. But he's constantly learning!

Someone once told me (in I'm sure it's a distorted quote) that 90 percent of fatherhood is just showing up. Dan Cummings always shows up. From the first time my siblings and I started playing sports, he was there volunteering to coach, even if he didn't know anything about the sport (e.g., soccer). During games, he was always quick with an encouraging word or piece of advice. My favorite was his mantra while I was on the pitching mound: "Throw strikes!" He usually shouted when I was a pitch away from walking my third-straight batter. After every game, he would follow up with a detailed postgame analysis over a milkshake or frozen Coke.

Beyond coaching, he also instilled in us a love of education and reading. I've never met anyone more well-read than my old man. He's read at least two books a week for the last 30-plus years. That's over 3,000 books. I have no doubt that these qualities were ingrained into my siblings, Charlie and Maureen, and have helped them become the veterinarian and teacher that they are today.



Patrick and Dan Cummings

Obviously, a newsletter article is far from enough space to paint a full picture of what my father means to my family and me. What he has taught us about the importance of self-sacrifice, hard work, and devotion are worthy of admiration. This month, I'm happy to introduce you all to my dad, Dan Cummings. If you haven't met him yet, you can find him at White Sox Park this summer on Father's Day.

Pat Cummings

BRAISED CHICKEN AND SPRING VEGETABLES

This simple and delicious one-pot recipe is perfect for a weeknight. It only requires about 15 minutes of hands-on work, but will taste like you spent all day building flavors. It's a hearty comfort food that's sure to delight eaters of all ages.

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 8 small bone-in chicken thighs
- 1 cup low-sodium chicken broth
- 12 radishes, halved
- 4 large carrots, cut into sticks
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2 tablespoons fresh chives, chopped
- Salt and pepper

Directions

1. Heat olive oil in a large saucepan or Dutch oven over medium-high heat.
2. Season the chicken with salt and pepper. Brown in pan for 6-7 minutes per side.
3. Remove chicken from pan and scrape off excess fat. Add broth and stir in radishes, carrots, and sugar.
4. Return chicken to pan, placing on top of vegetables. Gently simmer with lid on pan for 15-20 minutes. Finish with chives.

Recipe inspired by Real Simple