

Law firm reaches century mark

By SARAH DAY
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BLUE EARTH — The Frundt and Johnson Law Firm has a long-standing tradition rooted in family and community appreciation — in fact, it's a 100-year long tradition.

In 1907, Henry John Frundt came to Blue Earth to practice law, and did so for many years. His son, John Henry, watched his father practice law and decided early on to become a lawyer. In 1938, he was admitted to the Minnesota bar and began practicing law with his father a year later — and did so for 50 years. In 1967, Charles "Chuck" Frundt followed his father, John Henry's example and became a lawyer with the firm as well — and has been practicing for 40 years. In 1989 Chuck became a certified civil trial specialist. In 1998, David Frundt joined the firm, following in his father's footsteps. In 2004, Karl Frundt, David's brother, joined the firm until 2006, when he moved to Denver.

"We've had four generations with the firm and (they) have been with the firm all 100 years," Chuck said.

Chuck said the unique

thing about the family tradition is that it was never forced and no one was ever pushed into becoming a lawyer.

"They just did it on their own," he said. "I'm happy they did, but I did not direct them that way."

David is proud to be part of the family tradition.

"It's interesting because within the family, I don't know if it was ever presented as a tradition," he said. "I don't want to put any pressure on the next generation."

David has three sons, the oldest is 5.

"I never had any (pressure) from my grandfather or dad — I think they're proud that I did it," he said.

David isn't exactly sure why he got into law, but he recognized it as an intellectual challenge and as something that was "in the blood."

"It does help people and you are in the service of people and with the knowledge of that, I knew it would be a satisfactory career," he said.

Though the Frundts have practiced law together for generations, the firm hasn't been limited to family only. Throughout the years, many long-standing partners have practiced law with the Frundts, such as David L. Morse, Robert Hibbs and Brian Roverud. Most of the partners stayed with the firm for more than 18 years. In 1973, Michael Johnson joined the law firm and remains there today. This year Daniel Lundquist came to the firm after practicing in Mankato for more than a year.

"Four generations is quite a tradition and unique situation ..." Chuck said, "not to diminish the contribution of our partners. I think we, as a firm, appreciate our partners."

He believes the reason the business has stayed strong throughout the years is because of the family tradition.

"I think that's why we've had such long-standing people," he said.

Johnson agrees.

"The unique thing here is the family connection," Johnson said. "I think that tradition is somewhat of a pillar the firm has been anchored into."

An Owatonna native, he earned his



LONG-STANDING TRADITION — Attorneys David Frundt, Charles Frundt and Mike Johnson welcome David Lundquist into the firm. The firm is celebrating its 100-year anniversary this year.

undergraduate degree in political science. After graduating from law school, he worked in Minneapolis for a year. He and his "high school sweetheart" wife decided they wanted to get back into a rural small town setting, and thus they landed in Blue Earth.

"I had offers to go to larger towns, but I was looking for the people to practice with," he said. "So I waited for a firm where I liked the town and the people (in the firm)."

Chuck and John Henry sold him "on their approach to law and the community."

All of the Frundts and partners have joined in the tradition of serving the community as best they can.

"The main goal of this firm is to serve Faribault County and the people who live here," David said. "That is our goal and will continue to be our goal."

Johnson sees the company as a client-centered and community-centered firm that is engaged with the clients and good at identifying with them.

"Contrast that with an academic approach," he said. "In Minneapolis we rarely had clients walk in the door."

Most of the law work was done over the phone, and impersonal. He loves that the Blue Earth firm cares about people, and that's what sold him on staying.

Lundquist grew up in Wheaton, near Fargo, N.D., and wanted to serve in an agricultural community. He believes the Frundts and Johnson allow him to practice law in a wide scope so he can grow as an attorney.

"They made me feel part of the 100-year tradition," he said. "They've been really welcoming."

Lundquist, like Johnson, believes the Frundts' approach to the business is what makes it long-lasting.

"The reason for the longevity is because they know how important it is for the business to have an open door," he said. "I hope to maintain that tradition for a long time."

When Chuck looks back on the years of the firm he sees successes with significant cases, community involvement and level of service given. He hopes that tradition continues on through the generations.

"Well — I really don't know what's gonna happen 100 years from now. We have two younger attorneys that will be here for a long time," Johnson said.

"My role in this has been just at the tail end," David said. "I consider my legacy to be the next 100 years, with the last 100 years being the story of my father, and I look forward to working hard to write that next 100 years for the Blue Earth area — not just the firm."