

## 21 Steps

# How to Succeed as a Lawyer

By ROLAND BOYD of McKinney

Dear Son:

You are now in your senior year in law school. Maybe a few things I have learned in thirty years in the law practice will be helpful. Law school is teaching you things which will be good for your clients; the following will be good for you. You cannot have professional happiness unless you are financially successful.

One of the greatest pleasures in life is achievement. In my judgment, if you will remember the following 21 things, you will have a long, happy, and successful career.

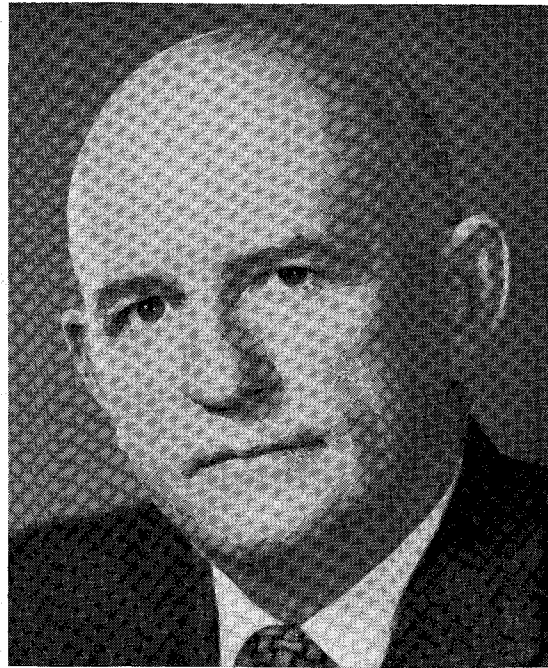
### 1. Remember, the rule of nine:

It works this way—nine people out of ten are good, honest, intelligent, decent, and fair-minded people. Therefore, if you want to have the odds, nine to one, in your favor, get on the right side of the issue. In the legal profession the right side of the issue is the side that helps society. In other words, don't injure your fellow man. In the courtroom the rule of nine works the same way. *Nine times out of ten the right side wins at the courthouse.* Bub, I believe that the lawyers in the smaller county seat cities engaging in the general practice of civil law are more convinced that the rule of nine really works, than the *average* city lawyers.

### 2. Remember, a lawyer's integrity is of vital concern to the community.

If the butcher, the baker and the candlestick maker are not honest, this is not a major catastrophe, but on the other hand the lawyer plays such a vital role in the lives of his fellow men that if he is not honest, it *is* a major catastrophe. Let me give you some examples of vital roles a lawyer is called on to play:

(a) A few years ago, shortly after noon in July the door to my private office opened; there stood a man, a little past



WHEN HE WROTE his son, Roland Boyd had no idea his letter would be published. Fellow lawyers convinced him other students should have the privilege of reading it, too.

middle age. I had represented him for many years; he was a successful farmer; he was very pale, was trembling all over as he said, "I have just made the worst mistake a man can possibly make, I have killed a man, I knew a second after it was done how terrible it was. For God's sake help me."

(b) About ten years ago three members of a family, two others of which had just had visited upon them one of the most horrible crimes that had ever occurred in Texas, came to my office. This family was face to face with stark unnatural tragedy. The spokesman said, "At a family meeting this morning we all agreed that we wanted you as special prosecutor, to help us see

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that justice is done."

(c) A few weeks ago an elderly retired farmer, a good, sound citizen, came to the office bringing with him a smartly and attractively dressed daughter, apparently about 35 years old. He told me a story of the daughter's marriage to an energetic, handsome, well-educated, dynamic young man, how well he was doing in business, how the family began growing, then embezzlement, then divorce, then a new life, then remarriage, then robbery with firearms and murder, now a death penalty in just a day or so. "We need your help."

(d) Several months ago, on Saturday afternoon, while I was in the office with the outside doors locked, a telephone call from a middle-aged man I had represented for years, as well as his father before him, in a distressed voice, said, "I am downstairs, your door was locked, I was just praying that you were in. I must talk to you." When he arrived, he showed me several daily newspapers that he had just gotten out of the Post Office from a distant city. The headlines and front-page articles told a story of a liquor store stickup with the owner being murdered when he tried to reach for a gun, the capture by police blockade, the laboratory reports proving conclusively who had fired the shot that killed the owner. His son, crying like a baby, the man said: "Help me. What can I do?"

(e) You might be employed by the State Bar of Texas to investigate, brief, file and try a fellow lawyer in a disbarment proceeding. This assignment cannot be taken lightly.

(f) In 30 years of practicing law I have felt that my professional duty required me to ask a jury to take a man's life on three different occasions. In two cases the jury complied with my request; in the third the defendant took his own life the day he was sentenced for life. Under these conditions the only reward life provides is a clear conscience. No profession can be more vital than one which makes such re-

quirements on its members. Therefore, the integrity of its members is certainly of major concern to society.

### 3. Remember, always be nice to people regardless of their social status, educational level, or financial rating, because:

(a) That boy who is now "jerking soda" at the drug store, 25 years from now *might* be president of the Investment Bankers Association of America and be calling you about an important matter in New York.

(b) That boy who is now picking up scrap metal in the alleys and selling it to get spending money, 20 years hence *might* be employing you to examine titles to ranch lands he is buying in other states.

(c) That boy, who, on graduation from high school, said, "I am not going to college because I already have all the education I need," *might* many years hence, by being elected chairman of the board of directors of a major manufacturing concern, prove the truth of his statement.

(d) Some successful people in business can neither read nor write.

### 4. Remember, in the practice of law under a democratic form of government there are no secrets.

Therefore, don't ever be a party to anything, don't put anything in a letter, don't say anything in conference or on the telephone that you would mind (except for your client's interest) seeing on the front page of a newspaper, on TV, or hearing from the witness stand, or on the radio.

### 5. Remember, the best way to disarm your enemies is to do what is just under the circumstances.

It absolutely drives them crazy. Often it will throw them into such confusion that they become helpless. Ordinarily their "double dealing" will "backfire" if you don't resort to the same tactics.

### 6. Remember, no people have ever developed a better method for settling disputes among men, than our judicial system.

It was developed by the legal profession, it has been through fire, millions of times; although not perfect, it is still the "best" there is. The "jury" is the heart of the system. Always defend the system. When

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