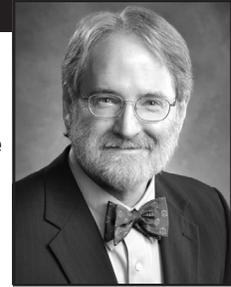


By James G. McGiffin, Jr., Esquire



## Stepping Up to the Plate: Ryan Newell

**I**f I aspire to be the best lawyer I can be, I must first try to be the best person I can be. I am fortunate to know many lawyers who have succeeded in their work, in part, because they are excellent people. This column The Journal will feature an article on one such lawyer. Each featured lawyer will exemplify the art of balance in life. I have learned much from these people. Perhaps readers will also benefit.

- Jim McGiffin

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Practicing trial law is a lot like playing baseball. Baseball is a game of strategy, from the development of the lineup to the head game between pitcher/catcher, batter, and hitter. It is an activity that requires a great deal of preparation and that also requires split second judgment and immediate execution. A baseball player can do his absolute best to make a play and be vindicated, or undone, by the umpire. And, then, there is the uniform. The analogues to law practice for each of these characteristics are obvious to lawyers. In addition, was not the first commissioner of professional baseball a federal District Court judge?<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps, it is surprising that there are not more lawyers who play (or have played) baseball at a high level. Fortunately for the Delaware Bar, there is at least one who is quickly making his mark: Ryan Newell.

Ryan is a relatively new Delaware lawyer (admitted in 2005) who recently joined Connolly Gallagher LLP, having previously spent his career at Connolly Bove Lodge and Hutz LLP. He spends much of his time in commercial litigation, though he considers his role as coun-

selor his most important one. Ryan hit the ground running when he began his career, as his first case was *New Jersey v. Delaware*,<sup>2</sup> a century-old dispute about riparian water rights resolved by the United States Supreme Court.

While new to the Bar, Ryan is not new to baseball. He grew up playing baseball, and played through his high school years at Salesianum. He walked on to the team at Notre Dame and played as a freshman, before dedicating himself to his academic



Photo Credit: Mike and Sue Newell

(and perhaps other social) pursuits. When he returned to Delaware to begin his legal career, Ryan resumed his avocation, playing semi-pro baseball, and then settled into an over 30 recreational league, where he played with fellow Delaware lawyers Max Walton, David Ross, and Brad Aronstam.

A commitment to fitness is part of Ryan's formula for keeping his life in balance. He manages the stress of his job with exercise, "at least once every day." Often he exercises with a partner, his

yellow Labrador Retriever, Reagan. Ryan reports that his exercise regime keeps him on an even keel.

The oldest of four boys, Ryan grew up in a home where family was important. His mother, Susan Newell, made sure Ryan and his brothers got to and from their many practices and games. Ryan's father, The Honorable Michael K. Newell of the Family Court in New Castle County, preceded Ryan at Connolly Bove Lodge and Hutz LLP. Despite his own busy schedule, Ryan's father came to all of the boys' games. Each game was a family event. And, that tradition continues with Ryan, as he has coached his youngest brother's baseball team and provided individual hitting lessons through high school.

When I talked to Ryan about this profile, he was convinced that I really ought to talk to his dad instead. Ryan describes his parents as great role models, professionally and personally. In addition to achieving great success as a lawyer, Ryan's father excelled as a husband and parent. Ryan, who is single, has not yet taken on the challenges of a family, but it is clear that he is cut from the same cloth as his parents.

In a short period of time, Ryan has served his community very well. He enjoys *pro bono* work, especially with the Office of the Child Advocate. He has used his organizational talents to run events for the Notre Dame Club of Delaware, the Delaware Foundation for Reaching Citizens with Intellectual disABILITIES, and the Rodney and Herrmann Inns of Court. Ryan serves on the Board of Catholic Charities and on the Executive Committee of the St. Thomas More Society. Ryan explains that community involvement recharges him.

1. Answer: Yes! Kenesaw Mountain Landis, from November 1920 until November 1944.

2. 2552 U.S. 597 (2008).

Ryan's position on the baseball diamond is catcher. He is not a flashy, acrobatic shortstop or a spectacular, home run stealing outfielder. He is steady, conscientious, and reliable. And, he is signaling to us by his own example that one can maintain health, family, and a successful practice, even at a young age. Come to think of it, catchers are often wise, too. Yogi Berra was a catcher, and it was he who said, "You can observe a lot by just watching." I suggest we watch Ryan, and we will observe a lot. ⚖️

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