

OUTSIDE THE BOX

'Extreme case of empathy' gives Parker Scheer personal injury lawyer a competitive edge

Eric J. Parker, managing partner of the 12-attorney law firm Parker Scheer LLP in Boston, says the reason behind his decision to become a complex personal injury lawyer had more to do with his personality, than anything else. "I've always been drawn to managing complicated issues ... and people who are in crisis situations." The native New Yorker's clients have usually fallen victim to traumatic injuries such as facial dog bites or suffered the death of a loved one, right before he starts work with them. In an interview with reporter Lisa van der Pool, he describes his work as a combination of acting as a lawyer, doctor and therapist to his clients. "We come into their lives and we undertake this huge responsibility of trying to put their lives back together again," he said.

What do you think of the term ambulance chaser?

I hate the expression and I hate the perception. I think it's unfounded. We're a trial firm that helps small and midsize businesses and individuals, in a crisis.

When is it not a good idea to sue a hospital?

I would say it's a fair statement that we probably turn down 80 to 90 percent of the medical malpractice cases that we review every year. There's a widespread misconception in the difference between medical malpractice and an unfortunate medical result. For all the people who are critical of plaintiff's attorneys ... if they ever knew how much the plaintiff's bar does to spare litigation. We do more explaining and sit-downs with people who want to sue. We have no interest in pursuing baseless cases.

Definition of a good day?

When I come home and I hear that my daughters or my wife got good news.

Toughest business decision?

Starting my own firm. I was made partner at one of the most wonderful trial firms, Sarrouf Law LLP in Boston. I left to give it a go on my own ... and it was the best decision.

Pet peeves?

One thing that's driving me nuts is watching the number of lawyers that Massachusetts is pouring into the legal system without regard to the economy. You have no idea how many unemployed graduates I've interviewed.

ERIC J. PARKER



Title: Managing Partner of Parker Scheer LLP

Education: Bachelor's from Vassar College, 1983. J.D. from Suffolk Law School, 1986

Residence: Weston

Age: 50

Traits that give you a competitive edge?

Probably an extreme case of empathy.

You got your FAA private pilot license six year ago, why?

I've always loved planes and I had always dreamed of doing it. (After my first) flight, I was hooked.

Three greatest passions?

Getting to the truth, learning something new everyday and being a good friend.

Person you're most interested in meeting?

Woody Allen. Because his observations, particularly as a New Yorker, are just so dead on.

Favorite restaurant?

Hands down, Peter Luger Steakhouse.