Banner & Witcoff remembers friend and partner D. Dennis Allegretti, 1928-2014

March 3, 2014

Banner & Witcoff remembers our friend and former name partner D. Dennis Allegretti, who died on Feb. 26, 2014. Dennis, who was a partner with the firm for more than four decades, practiced in the Chicago office and helped establish the Boston office.

Dennis was a 1952 graduate of Georgetown University Law Center and a graduate of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (B.S. Chemical Engineering, 1948; B.S., General Engineering, 1949). He served in the Army as the Office Chief of Ordinance, First Lieutenant, from 1951 to 1953.

Shortly after, he joined the Chicago office of the firm, the name of which ultimately morphed into Allegretti & Witcoff. In 1995, the firm merged with D.C.-based Banner Birch McKie & Beckett and became Banner & Allegretti. He remained with the firm until 1996, at which time the firm became Banner & Witcoff.

Dennis had a long, remarkable career leading the firm in historic and cutting-edge representations. He was involved with the team that briefed and successfully argued the seminal Sears v. Stiffel case (state's unfair competition law cannot, consistently with federal patent laws, impose liability for or prohibit the copying of an article that is not protected by a federal patent or a copyright) before the U.S. Supreme Court 50 years ago. In 1978, he also argued the Parker v. Flook case before the U.S. Supreme Court.

In addition, Dennis helped the firm prove that John Atanasoff was the inventor of the first electronic digital computer, ENIAC. He also helped prove that Amgen pioneered genetically engineered inventions to living organisms that were protectable by patents, such as cells making EPO.

In 1972, Dennis was one of the first patent lawyers to become a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers.

“Dennis was well known for his litigation skills, and many of our lawyers emulate his practices today as they prepare for the courtroom,” said Banner & Witcoff president Gary D. Fedorochko. “The firm offers its deepest sympathies to Dennis’ family.”

Following is his obituary:

Dennis Allegretti was born in Chicago on August 25, 1928, the only son of immigrant parents. A self-made man, he became one of the country’s most renowned patent trial lawyers. During his career he represented some of the most innovative and successful businesses in America, including household names in automobiles, chemicals, pharmaceuticals and technology. Admired and respected by his peers, Dennis even appeared before the United States Supreme Court. An avid reader of whodunits, a collector of antiques and a master of the New York Times crossword, he passed away on February 26. Dennis is survived by his wife, Marjorie, his sons Gregory and Daniel and his four grandchildren. In keeping with the deceased’s wishes, no services will be held.

Posted: March 3, 2014