



Staff photo by Kevin Harnack

ASKED & ANSWERED

TED WARPINSKI

Ted Warpinski's career is a blend of playing to his strengths and embracing the influence of his father.

Warpinski said he was in high school when he decided he had the right skills to be a lawyer. But he also had an interest in the environment through his father, a teacher who developed what became a popular environmental program with the Cooperative Educational Service Agency in Green Bay.

"This was during the '70s," Warpinski said, "and we just had the first Earth Day and there was all this excitement about the environment. And here he was putting together these programs on how schools could incorporate the environment into their education, and I went to a lot of them and I found it so interesting."

After graduating from Marquette Law School in 1987, Warpinski found a firm that let him combine his interests. He now is a shareholder at Milwaukee-based Friebert, Finerty & St. John SC, where he has practiced environmental, land use and construction law for his entire career.

His practice focuses on a range of topics, from helping homeowners get clean water after their wells were contaminated to assisting developers with their due diligence as they redevelop brownfield properties.

"Through the years, I've just become more entrenched in it," Warpinski said. "I enjoy what I do every day."

— MaryBeth Matzek

From 2L clerk to shareholder, Warpinski remains committed

Wisconsin Law Journal: What advice would you give law students or lawyers just starting out?

Ted Warpinski: With the job market the way it is, this is a difficult question. But my answer is: Try to find a mentor who has a passion for the law. I was so fortunate to get a job clerking at my current firm when I was a 2L, and for nearly 30 years I was able to watch and learn from Bob Friebert. While Bob had a wonderful legal mind, it was his enthusiasm for the law that made him a great lawyer.

WLJ: What song gets heavy rotation on your iPod?

Warpinski: Pretty much everything by The Avett Brothers. There is an honesty and earthiness to their music that really speaks to me.

WLJ: If you could live anywhere, where would it be?

Warpinski: Well, my wife and I recently spent two weeks on the big island of Hawaii, and that would be quite the place to live. But I am a Wisconsin boy at heart.

WLJ: What possession do you prize most?

Warpinski: While we just purchased an older home in the historic area of Ripon that I really love, and I have nearly 170,000 miles on my truck, if I had to pick one thing, it would have to be my guitar.

WLJ: What activity could you spend hours doing outside of work?

Warpinski: Well, I do like to golf a lot. But the real answer is probably making music.

WLJ: If you could have one superpower, what would it be?

Warpinski: Teleportation

WLJ: What famous person would you most like to have a drink with?

Warpinski: Bob Friebert, who I mentioned above, recently passed away, and I would have loved to have had one more drink with him. In the celebrity world, I think it would be George Clooney. He just seems like the kind of guy you would like to hang out with.

WLJ: Finish this sentence: Happiness is ...

Warpinski: coming home to my wife at the end of every day.