

Steven Lingenbrink - A real life example of one person helping to make a better community

by Charles A. Kimbrough

Steven Lingenbrink is an outstanding example for all trial lawyers on what it means to go the extra mile to make your community and world a better place for all. His motivation, in part, arises from his family, religion, membership in Rotary, organizational skills, and high energy – a drive best described as hyperactive. In summary, it is a part of his DNA. Whatever it is that makes him tick, Steve sets a high standard, for what it means to be a quality parent and for giving back to our worldwide community, which all lawyers should strive to emulate.

Steve's dad was successful in business. After retiring, his dad became a consultant and an entrepreneur along with his wife. By being positive role models, they set high standards for their three children. Little Stevie moved around during grade school from Ballard, to Chicago, and finally to White Bear Lake, Minnesota, a large suburb of St. Paul. His class was the first to graduate from the new Mariner High School. Four years later he graduated with a BS in geology and a minor in psychology from the University of Wisconsin. The move from Puget Sound and its temperate climate gave Steve the opportunity to experience a range of water and snow skiing, ice fishing, and lakes frozen so thick that there were roads across them in the winter. In the summer the Midwest offered beautiful sunshine, swimming, boating, river rafting, humidity and tornadoes.

As Steve grew to a young man his interests went from Cub Scouts to track, where he won many races and held several records, to singing in high school and as an adult in church performances. He has always had a love for music, and tries to keep up with the latest technologies and most recent recordings. Of course it helps to have two teenage daughters keeping him up on all the latest gadgets. Even as a toddler he was always inquisitive, wanting to know how everything was made or worked. This interest followed him into high school where he excelled in science. While in high school, Steve and one of his best friends built a small hydroplane



and spent the summers zipping across White Bear Lake which is similar in size to Lake Sammamish.

As a young boy, Steve went on many family vacations to a variety of locations across the United States. These trips often were by train, which was a fun way for a close family to travel. He found the varied terrain and the different geological formations fascinating. This interest helped lead to the BS degree in geology, and a short career as a geologist in Montana.

Steve has always been fascinated by mechanical things and as a teen he loved cars. This was the precursor to his love of motorcycles. Or perhaps this fascination was caused by the fact that his mother would not allow him to buy a motorcycle! Prior to even getting his driver's license he bought a fast-back mustang with money he earned as a stock boy at the local grocery store. Shortly after purchasing it he learned to drive a stick and later began the loving process of creating its custom paint job and making it beautiful

inside and out.

Our youthful wandering geologist, with a push from a senior lawyer, headed to Gonzaga Law School where he made law review and friends, three of whom are his partners. Steve's varied interests, laser like focus and organization skills also led him to take technical computer courses and become an expert in computers and software for lawyers. Several attorneys noted he gets more done in an hour or two than many do in a day. These traits and interests also led Steve and his wife Terri into a broad range of charitable activities.

Steve feels he has been very fortunate and wanted to show his gratitude by giving back not only to his local community but also to help those in our world community, who are less fortunate. He and his wife Terri involved their daughters so that they could learn about the qualities of good citizenship. He and many others have learned that you receive far greater personal reward by serving and helping others to overcome poverty or disease,



than you can imagine. I have known and seen Steve and his Rotary-based charitable service for nearly 15 years, as a result of our both being members of Bellevue Breakfast Rotary Club (BBRC). His many charitable service activities and financial generosity are exemplary. Steve's BBRC charitable service ranges from building schools in the slums of Nairobi, Kenya; to building dental clinics at remote Russian Siberian orphanages; to developing wells for Guatemalan Indian mountain villages with no clean water, which caused children to die at a high rate; to delivering and installing computers for children in schools or community centers where none exist, in conjunction with Computers for the World and Bellevue's Newport High School Cisco Systems Networking Academy.

Locally, Steve has been involved in nearly all of BBRC's annual or monthly charitable activities ranging from repairing elderly residents homes; painting and repairing Eastside adult day care facilities; restoring habitat for salmon; monthly work at Northwest Harvest's food bank; scholarships for excellent Sammamish High School seniors who cannot afford college; donating money and food directly and through Hopelink, at Thanksgiving, Christmas and other times for those in need; helping fund development of Bellevue Spray Park; Newcastle YMCA, Kinderling Center pro-

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grams (for disabled infants and young children); Deca; Rotary Polio Plus, which is a world-wide program to eradicate polio; scholarships for high school students to attend Business Week; Treehouse; Esperanza; Rotary youth exchange; various Eastside Boys and Girls Clubs; and many more too numerous to list. While engaged in most of the BBRC's many individual service activities he has also led by being the head of nearly every major committee, including fundraising as well as president of the club. He is presently head of a key BBRC committee, which he is taking to new heights, while at the same time carrying out the duties of the 2nd highest regional officer in Rotary. When praised for many of these outstanding accomplishments, Steve nearly blushes and deflects the praise on to others who have worked with him.

Steve's heart and caring nature is well illustrated by his quick action in stepping forward with fellow EAGLE Brian Boddy, also of



Kirkland, to establish, partially fund and publicize the Cass Preston Support Fund to help the wife and very young children of this youthful defense attorney who died in a sudden and

unexpected manner. Steve and Brian were both recognized in December 2008 by the Washington Defense Trial Lawyers (WDTL) for their spirit of generosity and decency. The

citation read in part... "as plaintiffs attorneys who exemplified the kind of behavior WDTL members strive to achieve: reason, objectivity, excellence in legal work, and adherence to not just the letter of the ethical and moral obligations of the profession, but to the spirit as well..." The award is made to attorneys that are recognized in the legal community as being at the forefront of their profession.

Steve's charitable giving and service is truly remarkable for a parent of active teenagers and a trial attorney with a very busy personal injury practice. He is a true role model in action for the Rotary motto – Service Above Self. As a former partner noted, "Steve has matured into a great husband, family man, humanitarian, and trial attorney, whose qualities we all should try to emulate." A great summary for a truly fine guy.

We should all try to give back as Steve does.

Charles A. Kimbrough, WSAJ EAGLE member, retired in 2007 but acts as an arbitrator occasionally in elder personal injury and nursing home litigation.