

Tucson Citizen

Friday, January 19, 2001

Who Runs Tucson?

grand

Richard Grand has withstood years of derision as a plaintiff's attorney, but he wouldn't have it any other way.

"Ambulance chaser" is kind. Richard Grand can remember when the kind of law he practices was derided in terms considerably more blunt.

"Plaintiff's lawyers were called whores," he says. "They were low, very low."

That assessment hasn't changed too much in the 40-plus years Grand has been plying his trade. Society's unfavorable perception of most lawyers, what they do and how they do it, could very well rank right along with death and taxes as one of life's certainties.

An age-old proverb has it that it is better to be a mouse in a cat's mouth than a man in a lawyer's hands. In Grand's view, many still look at lawyers that way. Especially plaintiff's lawyers.

Despite his own success and a national reputation, Grand thinks the unofficial caste system of American professions continues to put them down near the untouchable category. "It was not respectable in 1959, and it's not respectable now," he says.

However elusive respectability might be, winning is another matter entirely.

'I'm a word merchant. The law is not what persuades a jury. It's words. It's an appeal to common sense, justice and emotions.'

Attorney Richard Grand

This is where Grand comes in. Hire Grand to represent you, and the odds of winning — and winning big — instantly turn to your favor. Indeed, if you're injured and you walk, roll or are carried into a courtroom and Grand is there to argue your case, history tells us the person you sued is almost sure to leave that courtroom a lot poorer.

Since beginning private practice in 1959, Grand has won 96 verdicts or settlements of \$1 million or more. He represents only plaintiffs. He has not lost a jury trial since 1962. In the past two years, he has won nine seven-figure settlements. His largest win ever, a \$10 million cash settlement in a Tucson medical malpractice case, was in 1998.

"It's kind of a Robin Hood thing," Grand quips. "All I do really is redistribute money."

Grand is widely credited with single-handedly creating the "market" for plaintiff's attorneys in Arizona. Few lawyers did what he did. Even fewer did it as well.

In 1972, Grand won what was then the largest per-



Attorney Richard Grand is widely credited with creating the market for personal injury attorneys in Arizona.

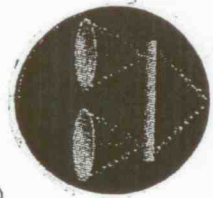
GRAND, continued on next page

Grand

Continued from previous page

sonal injury award to a single plaintiff in American history, a \$3.5 million payment to a Tucson man burned in an accident. That same year he founded the Inner Circle of Advocates, an exclusive club of 100 lawyers

who have completed at least 50 personal injury trials and have at least one verdict in excess of \$1 million.



A year later, the Tucson Citizen dubbed him "Tucson's \$1,000,000 Mouthpiece."

Grand chuckles at the description, though he doesn't question its veracity. "I'm a word merchant," Grand says. "The law is not what persuades a jury. It's words. It's an appeal to common sense, justice and emotions."

A passionate theater-goer, Grand doesn't need much prompting to see the similarities between his vocation and his avocation.

"Every trial is a theater, but not every theater performance is a trial," he says. "With the theater, you need to get people's minds going. That is exactly what you have to do with a jury."

Slender and soft-spoken, Grand was born 71 years ago in what is now the Polish city of Gdansk. Then it was Freistadt Danzig, the Free City of Danzig, a predominantly German-speaking enclave that in September 1939 fell victim to Hitler's panzer divisions. He left as a 9-year-old, with his parents and most of the city's other Jews.

"You were very conscious of the fact that you weren't wanted," he says.

Talking about that time is one of the few topics Grand says he would rather avoid. "I don't look back," he says. But in an inward-looking moment, he speculates that "survivor guilt" might be one of the factors that drew him into a profession concerned with meting out justice.

Grand moved to Tucson 50 years ago this June, days after earning a bachelor's degree from New York University. An asthma sufferer, he came to the desert "because it was the driest place."

He dabbled in radio and politics before studying law at the University of Arizona.

Grand is not the type of man who flaunts the trappings of his success. He continues to live in the same house he purchased in 1964 for \$33,000. He drives a 1989 Ford, tells time with a \$45 Timex and is proud to still wear 25-year-old jackets he purchased at Steinfeld's department store - on sale. Those jackets are especially handy when arguing cases before a jury.

"I don't want to be recognized. I don't want to be noticed. I want them to hear me," he explains.

Oddly enough, the success Grand found as a plaintiff's lawyer followed a short, failure-ridden stint practicing a very different kind of law.

His first job as a lawyer was as a deputy prosecutor in the Pima County Attorney's Office. In a period of three months, Grand lost 14 out of 15 jury trials.

"It must be the all-time record for failure," he says. He has more than made up for it.