

Brothers in Law

Personal injury firm Binder Law Group PLC has been a family affair for nearly 50 years.

By Shane Nelson

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Longtime litigator Warren J. Binder started working in his dad's law office as a high school student.

"I felt like it was in my DNA," Binder said of becoming lawyer, noting there are many attorneys in his extended family today. "It just seemed like a natural fit."

Warren Binder and his brother Ronald M. Binder run Encino-based Binder Law Group PLC, a firm their father Richard C. Binder started in 1973. The personal injury shop, long located in Pasadena, relocated to Encino this March.

"We were the only human beings on the street, on the freeway, out of the house," Warren Binder said, chuckling while he described moving during the peak of the pandemic shutdown.

"It was scary. I thought the police were going to stop us, and we were all going to die," he continued, laughing. "But we couldn't help it because we had this move planned."

There have, of course, been other COVID-related challenges for the firm since the relocation. Ronald Binder said a recent video trial conference, during which a number of difficult jury selection questions were raised, was particularly worrisome for a case he's slated to try in downtown Los Angeles next June.

"If you want a normal trial, like it was before the COVID days, there's no foreseeable future in which that is happening," the plaintiffs' litigator said. "It's scary."

Ronald Binder, who grew up with his older brother Warren in Northridge, started working in the library of his dad's law office around age 10. And it wasn't long before time in court, watching his father in action,



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From left: Narek Garibyan, Warren J. Binder and Ronald Binder of Binder Law Group PLC at their office in Encino.

inspired dreams of helming his own plaintiffs' litigations.

"I would not only watch my dad but also the defense lawyers, and I knew that's what I wanted to be," Ronald Binder said. "I wanted to be in the courtroom, advocating for clients and getting justice for victims."

Handling everything from medical malpractice and workers compensation matters to catastrophic auto injury and premises liability cases, the Binder brothers manage their own caseloads and have never tried a case together, according to Warren. But they consult each other regularly on matters and frequently work together on strategy and planning issues.

"There's nobody I'd rather practice law with than my brother," Warren Binder said. "He's a damn good lawyer."

Pasadena litigator Alex D. Guerrero, who in recent years has worked on cases with both brothers, described the younger Binder as extraordinarily hardworking.

"Ron is an exceptionally skilled attorney, who pays meticulous attention to detail," Guerrero said. "And the thing I love about Warren is he just never gives up."

Years ago, Guerrero opposed Warren Binder in a dog-bite matter and brought a demur in the case that was sustained in part.

"Then he amended, and before I knew it, I was right back where I started," Guerrero said of Warren Binder. "It was a real chess match with him. ... So I developed a real respect for him intellectually just in terms of him being a very worthy adversary, and he got a really good settlement for his client out of that case."

Longtime litigator Patrick M. Kelly, who is now an ADR Services Inc. neutral but worked with Warren Binder a few years ago on a serious accident case, said Warren did an excellent job for his client and "so much so that I recommended him to another potential client soon after."

"I think he's a very thoroughly

prepared, aggressive attorney," Kelly continued. "But he's also, in the back of his mind, willing to compromise if necessary for the benefit of his client."

Both Binder brothers were quick to mention the substantial gratification they each take from helping clients, and the attorneys made a point of detailing just how important it is to build meaningful relationships with people they represent.

"You're the lawyer, you're a friend, you're a psychologist to them, and if they want to vent, who better to vent to than their lawyer?" Ronald Binder said. "I want to hear what your problems are because those are things that may

become important during the litigation. ... I want to know what my client is going through."

Los Angeles litigator Brian Panish has known the Binder brothers and their father for decades and has tried a number of cases with Warren.

"It's a family deal," Panish said. "The father started it, and his sons have since taken over. I'm sure dad is very proud of what his sons have done with the firm. They've taken it to another level."

Panish said both attorneys "do a great job representing their clients," but he did offer a little distinction between the two.

"Ron is kind of the nuts-and-bolts guy, and he's in there grinding it out every day," Panish explained. "Warren's doing that too, but he's more of a rainmaker."

Beneficiaries of invaluable mentorship as young attorneys, the Binder brothers both said passing their expertise on to new lawyers has been an important constant over the years. The firm hired Narek Garibyan as an associate last fall, in part, because of his unmistakable desire to learn, according to Ronald Binder.

"They'll teach you all the black-letter law you want in law school, but they don't teach you how to be a lawyer," he said. "That's a whole different learning experience, and it only comes with getting an opportunity."

Garibyan described himself as a sponge at the moment and said he's certainly willing to admit he doesn't know everything. He's also clearly grateful for the mentorship he is receiving.

"Frankly, there aren't a lot of people out there willing to do that nowadays," Garibyan said. "Warren and Ron make everything a teaching moment for me, and I very much appreciate that."