

# THE DAILY RECORD

WESTERN NEW YORK'S SOURCE FOR LAW, REAL ESTATE, FINANCE AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE SINCE 1908

## GRAWA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### Summer is the time to regain balance

By **HEIDI SCHULT GREGORY**  
Daily Record Columnist

I love summer, and I love summer in Rochester.

Summer, with its longer, lighter days, has a certain flow, a more relaxed feel. It is a season known for barbecues, outdoor fun, relaxation and vacations. During the summer, I spend more time outdoors than indoors (at least whenever possible). I pause longer to look at sunsets, read entire books (without putting them down after the first few chapters), catch up with neighbors and colleagues, go for long bike rides or walks with my family, find any excuse to take the kids for ice cream, and otherwise enjoy the simple pleasures of the season.

In Rochester, summer means weekend festivals, the Red Wings, the Rhinos, SeaBreeze, outdoor dining, sporting events, trips to the lake ... the list goes on. The weather (while never warm and sunny enough) is comfortable and usually workable for outdoor plans. The community comes alive and people seem genuinely happy.

Many lawyers have a hard time relaxing, taking time off and balancing the demands of a stressful job with family life. The legal profession is not an easy one — it can take its toll if the necessary down time is not taken.

The demands of our profession are always present, whether they manifest themselves as filing deadlines, client requests or a court appearances. Through the years, I have had to remind myself to take time, a “mental health” day or a few hours to catch up on personal or family matters. If you allow it, work has a way of controlling your life and schedule. The advent of certain technology makes it increasingly easy to “stay connected” — such as through the use of cell phones, PDAs and e-mail — but often makes it more difficult

to stop working.

The burn out rate for attorneys is staggeringly high, and job satisfaction overall is low. Studies suggest alarming numbers of attorneys will leave the profession before their 10th anniversary of legal practice. We need to do more to retain and assist our younger lawyers, and it starts with making sure they have a balanced life.

While I appreciate generational differences regarding work ethic, as a profession we need to ensure lawyers learn early on in their careers exactly how to achieve appropriate work/life balance. Attorneys who are truly satisfied with their profession seem to have mastered a healthy respect for the demands of the job, while recognizing the need for down time. There is no magic formula, nor does one size fit all, but we need to encourage attorneys to work hard and prioritize deadlines while also making time to reflect on their lives, spend quality time with their families and get involved in other activities. An attorney with a balanced schedule is more likely to stay in the legal profession for the long haul.

What does all of this have to do with summer? There is no better season than summer to relax and take a vacation day. Now is the time to regain a more balanced life.

Rochester's summers are short, so don't miss the opportunity. Work hard, but get outside. Take the evenings off and relax. Encourage your fellow lawyers to enjoy what Rochester has to offer and to stop fretting over tomorrow's deadline. Yes, in the summer, even lawyers need to have some fun. Enjoy!

*Heidi Schult Gregory is a member of Harris Beach PLLC and serves on the Health Care Providers Industry Team as well as the Business and Commercial Litigation Practice Group. She is GRAWA's 26th president.*

