

Five from Hartzog Conger Cason & Neville Awarded Journal Record's 2006 Leadership in Law

The Journal Record – June 2, 2006

Hartzog Conger Cason & Neville attorneys J. William Conger, J. Leslie LaReau, Laura Hagg McConnell and Kevin B. Ratliff have been recognized with the Journal Record's 2006 *Leadership in Law Award*. Lois A. Clarkson was the only paralegal to receive the award. The *Leadership in Law* program was created to honor legal professionals who strive to improve the communities where they live.

J. William Conger, founding partner with HCCN, retired after 25 years with the firm to join the staff at Oklahoma City University as general counsel and distinguished lecturer in law. He remains in an Of Counsel position with the firm. "My father was a significant influence on my life because he taught me to care about people, to love good books, to laugh and dream, but also to work hard for the greater good," said Conger.

Lois A. Clarkson, litigation paralegal with HCCN, mentors high school students who are interested in the law as a career. "It is a rewarding experience and an important phase of my leadership with the Central Oklahoma Association of Legal Assistants (COALA) and the legal field in exposing these young people to the real world of law," Clark said. "I try to be a good role model for my children, grandchildren and my fellow workers. The workplace, especially, is not the place for unkind words and I hope by treating everyone with kindness and respect, I can influence others to do the same." "To help a child is truly one of the greatest gifts I can give to society," she said. She considers her most significant personal accomplishment "raising two wonderful, well-educated daughters who are not only great professionals but successful mothers. I take great pride in the adults they have become.

J. Leslie LaReau practices estate planning, post-death administration and related tax and business succession planning. "I believe I have been successful at balancing work with my family life, which has also allowed me to stay active in church and civic activities," LaReau said. "I was a member of our building committee at church when we did a significant capital improvements project. We were able to give sacrificially to the project as well as serve on the fundraising and building committees. We have been able to see the difference the building addition has made to our church's ministry." LaReau considers her two daughters as two of the most important influences in her life. "They are my dream come true."

Laura Hagg McConnell, a partner with HCCN, practices in the areas of family law, employment law and commercial litigation. She credits role models early in her career for helping her choose the law. "I worked with some very fine lawyers, including Jim Stuart, who set a wonderful example," she said. McConnell said her parents have had an important influence in her life by their example of hard work and sacrifice for the family. "They loved us unconditionally and they have become our best friends as well as parents."

Kevin Ratliff is an associate with HCCN who practices in the areas of tax planning and tax controversies as well as trusts and estates. "I am really lucky to have my wife, Catherine. I learn so much from her. She has the wonderful ability to make everyone

around her feel comfortable and special,” Ratliff said. “My parents have taught me so very much. They married at an early age, have worked hard and accomplished so much. They have always been wonderful loving parents and I hope I can give my child as much as they gave me and my brother.” Quote on philosophy: “Try to be a better person every day, both personally and professionally.”