



*The Road  
Less Traveled*



84<sup>th</sup> ★★★★★★  
Chancellor

RUDOLPH GARCIA



BY GINA FURIA RUBEL

**T**ry to picture Rudolph “Rudy” Garcia on an old Kawasaki Avenger motorcycle. Somehow, the three-piece suits favored by the formidable litigator don’t quite fit with the powerful, no-frills 1960s-era motorcycle. But get to know Rudy well, and you will find that behind the conservative dress and impressive legal record is a renaissance man who traveled the country on his bike, can vividly recount the Woodstock experience and has many a trick up his sleeve (of the magic variety, that is).

Rudy was born in South Philadelphia to the daughter of Italian immigrants and the son of Mexican immigrants. His parents met while his father’s WWII naval destroyer was docked in the Philadelphia shipyard. They were married and had three children including Rudy and his two older sisters. Three years after Rudy was born, his family moved to a town near King of Prussia, Pa., which as Rudy recalls, consisted then of only a few small buildings and a swamp. Rudy’s father was a commercial artist who painted numerous classic advertisements, including the Jolly Green Giant, the little Coppertone girl with the exposed tan line and the Maxwell House coffee man. His mother was a ballroom dance instructor who later sold real estate.

Rudy’s parents separated when he was five and it was growing up with single parents that began to shape the attorney’s self-reliant, independent nature. He hadn’t planned on going to college, but an Upper Merion High School guidance counselor encouraged him to apply. He sent one application to Penn State – after the deadline had expired – and found himself accepted to the university’s Hazleton, Pa., campus. At first focusing on engineering which Rudy decided was too limiting, he ultimately studied liberal arts. He was on his own after high school, so he worked to pay his own way through college, including tuition, books, rent, groceries and all the other expenses that students incur.

But Rudy grew restless in Hazleton and after his second year of college, took time off to hitchhike across the country. He left Pennsylvania with a pair of jeans, a sweatshirt, the sneakers on his feet and \$10. After a couple of weeks he reached California, but unable to find work, he backtracked to Salt Lake City, Utah. There he landed a landscaping job and put a roof over his head, renting a room in a coworker’s basement. Rudy remained in Salt Lake City for four months before he purchased a second-hand Kawasaki A7 Avenger motorcycle and rode it back to Pennsylvania.

Though he was only planning to visit Pennsylvania before

taking off on his bike again, traveling the country as he had had changed Rudy’s perspective about his home state. Pennsylvania’s mountains, its lush vegetation and its rolling hills beckoned him to stay. And of course, his friends were in Pennsylvania as well. “There was no good reason to be anywhere else,” Rudy said.

So Rudy completed his undergraduate studies at Temple University while continuing to support himself, graduating magna cum laude in 1974. His only exposure to law was through movies and television, but having had his fill of manual labor, Rudy wanted to pursue a profession that would utilize his intellect and thought law might be a good fit. He was right. He attended Temple Law, where he was Moot Court president and a member of Law Review, graduating cum laude in 1977.

### The Consummate Lawyer

After law school, Rudy “got a lot of trial experience in a hurry” when he started his career at a 10-lawyer firm in Philadelphia, he recalled. When the firm split up a year later, he joined Saul Ewing LLP, where he became a partner after only six years. He stayed at Saul Ewing for 27 years. In October 2005, a group of Saul Ewing trial lawyers, Rudy among them, moved to Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney PC.

Currently a shareholder at Buchanan, Rudy thrills in hard-fought jury trials. He relishes the process of sifting through extensive facts and reducing them to an accessible and compelling story – not an easy task

when one is dealing with complex business litigation. With millions and often billions of dollars at stake, Rudy tries class action, antitrust, securities, intellectual property, construction, telecommunications and other commercial cases in federal and state courts. In 2002, he reportedly won one of the largest jury verdicts in the country and the largest in Pennsylvania, in a federal antitrust case involving the electronic article surveillance industry.

Despite his success, the self-made attorney’s friends and colleagues describe him as exceedingly modest. “In some respects, he is a throwback to the period when I first entered the profession 36 years ago,” said Abraham C. Reich, co-chairman of Fox Rothschild LLP and a past Bar Association Chancellor. “Lawyers who practiced their profession with a dedication and passion without the need for limelight. . . . Action, but humility, were the hallmarks of the great lawyers I observed as a young lawyer. Rudy reminds me of those lawyers.”

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Rudy Garcia and his wife, Randi Pastor Garcia, in the kitchen of their Wynnewood home.



Indeed, William P. Fedullo of Rosen, Schafer & DiMeo, LLP, who has known Rudy for approximately 20 years and worked closely with him through the Bar Association and The Justinian Society of Philadelphia, recalled a significant victory (to the tune of \$80 million) that Rudy won on behalf of a client. “The case required brilliant lawyering,” said Bill, “but Rudy was humble about it.” Rudy is not a man who needs the spotlight, his friend continued. “He’s comfortable with who he is and where he is in life. Rudy wants others to shine.”

Wilson Elser Moskowitz Edelman & Dicker LLP Partner Rochelle M. Fedullo, who is married to Bill and has similarly worked closely with Rudy through the Bar Association and other professional organizations, described Rudy as a brilliant analyst and tireless worker. “He is a circumspect strategic planner, a meticulous organizer, as well as a creative problem solver. Rudy is entirely self-possessed, but never self-important. . . . I know from first-hand experience that Rudy is a loyal and supportive friend and colleague who works selflessly to help others.”

When one considers Rudy’s background and his professional qualities, the pieces fall into place. It becomes clear that being self-made has led to that rare combination of self-confidence and humility that often

mark great lawyers and great leaders.

Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas President Judge Pamela Pryor Dembe has known Rudy since they started Temple Law together in 1974. Where many law students were hyper-competitive, nervous sorts, Rudy always exuded calm, Judge Dembe observed. “Nothing has changed: Rudy remains calm, thoughtful, quietly funny and both a gentleman and a gentle man. I know that he will assume office with a sensible, achievable agenda. He will build a consensus to reach his goals, and he will be courteous and dignified – a great individual to have at the helm.”

Beyond the matters he tries and his work for the Bar Association and other professional organizations, Philadelphia court officials know Rudy well through his commitment to the Court of Common Pleas Electronic Filing Committee and his service as a Commerce Court Judge Pro Tempore.

Court of Common Pleas Trial Division Administrative Judge D. Webster Keogh spent a great deal of time with Rudy in connection with the court’s e-filing system. In his role as Bar Association representative during the system’s development, Rudy “was always the voice of reason, reflection and consideration” in evaluating the big picture as well as the needs of the practitioner, the judge said. “As the voice of the bar, he worked tirelessly on the details and successful rollout of the system. He was very instrumental in the final package. It reflects well on Rudy that the final product is as successful as it is.” The e-filing system would not be so user friendly had it not been for Rudy’s input, Judge Keogh noted.

Echoing the sentiments of Abe Reich, Judge Keogh also said Rudy’s integrity serves as a reminder of what the profession should be. “When I first came to the bar, it was much less competitive and a lawyer’s word was his or her word. Rudy exemplifies the best traditions of the profession in that he can truly be taken at his word.”

Clearly Rudy possesses skills that Philadelphia lawyers of the past couldn’t have imagined. The technologically savvy trial attorney enjoys spending his free time creating websites and working on graphic design and programming. This is a nod to his creative side (recall

that Rudy’s father was a commercial artist) and his passion for details and problem-solving. Close friend and 2004 Bar Association Chancellor Gabriel L.I. Bevilacqua noted that when he ran for Chancellor, Rudy assumed responsibility for creating his website, “ElectGabe.com” and actually wrote the code that created the site.

Rudy has also designed (and used) computer litigation support systems for more than 25 years. He is responsible for designing and programming Philadelphia’s first law-firm website. More recently, he held numerous training seminars to teach court employees, attorneys, paralegals and others how to use the Philadelphia courts’ e-filing system.

Rudy’s wife of more than 30 years, Randi Pastor Garcia, also credits Rudy with being adept at fixing an impressive array of household appliances and fixtures. This particular talent is a result of the many odd jobs Rudy held as a young adult. Before he could fix items around their house, though, Rudy had to woo Randi. It seems his skills as a magician came in handy in this respect.

When the couple first started dating, Randi recalled, she was very sick one weekend and Rudy agreed to keep her company. “To my surprise and delight, he entertained me with various magic tricks. Rudy is a skilled magician who can do amazing tricks with cards and sleight of hand.” Their son, Jon, picked up many of these tricks (not to mention Rudy’s passion for music) and with Rudy’s guidance, performed magic shows for family and friends as a child. Today, Jon is an accomplished musician – a talent for which they are very proud.

Of his wife, Randi, Rudy sees her as so much more than his life partner. He says she “helped me discover more about myself than I knew existed. Randi helped me to improve the social skills that I wasn’t taught as a boy. Early on, she taught me about social etiquette and interactions. Today she is my confidant and sounding board.”

### **Rudy Works His Magic for the Bar Association**

Like his success as an attorney, Rudy’s devotion to the Philadelphia Bar is a product of starting with nothing and achieving success and financial



Rudy and his wife, Randi, have been married for more than 30 years. Their son Jon is an accomplished musician.

Photo Courtesy of Rudolph Garcia

security. “What better way to pay that forward than to donate a year of service in my prime to the betterment of Philadelphia lawyers by serving as Chancellor,” he said. “I owe that to our profession.”

Rudy joined the Bar Association in 1977. He has since chaired or co-chaired the Federal Courts Committee, the State Civil Committee, the State Civil Litigation Section, the Website Committee and the Charter and Bylaws Committee. He has also served on the Professional Responsibility Committee, the Minorities in the Profession Committee and far too many other committees to list. He served three multi-year terms on the Board of Governors, served as an American Bar Association delegate and sat on the Task Force on ABA Standards Relating to Jury Trials and on the Commission on Judicial Selection and Retention.

Beyond the Bar Association, Rudy is an American Bar Foundation fellow, sits on the ABA Advisory Panel and is a member of the American and Pennsylvania bar associations’ litigation sections. He was chancellor of The Justinian Society from 2006 to 2008 and remains on its Board of Governors.

Rudy’s pro bono efforts also include The Hamilton Circle, which supports the Philadelphia Bar Foundation; Philadelphia Volunteers for the Indigent Program (VIP); serving as an arbitrator in state and federal courts; and presenting seminars and CLEs sponsored by the Pennsylvania Bar Institute, the Dispute Resolution Institute, the Pennsylvania Insurance Department and the Insurance Society of Philadelphia.

As Chancellor of the Bar Association, Rudy would like to increase the Association’s value to members; create a long-range advisory council; better communicate all we do to members and the public; support the public interest

community; improve diversity in our profession; defend the judiciary against efforts to undermine its authority, objectivity and independence; improve public understanding of the legal system; increase active participation among Philadelphia lawyers; encourage pro bono legal service; eliminate the additional tax burden imposed on partnerships and other unincorporated law firm entities; support efforts to improve the judicial selection process; work with local schools to improve public education; and work constructively with the City of Philadelphia, other governmental entities and the business community in pursuit of common goals.

“Rudy never just adds his name to a list of volunteers, but invariably attracts roles that require his hard work and unselfish participation,” said Bevilacqua. “Quietly competent and always unassuming, Rudy is one of a select few who merit consideration for the rarely awarded Antonin Scalia Award for Legal Excellence.” Gabe is confident that Rudy “will earn his place among the best of a group that deserved the mantle of leadership and the title of Chancellor of the Philadelphia Bar Association.”

Sayde J. Ladov, the 2009 Chancellor, is confident that, “rock solid and stalwart,” Rudy will provide another year of outstanding service to the Bar Association in 2011. And his wife Randi knows, “Rudy will bring his intelligence, creativity and strong leadership skills to the chancellorship, while having fun in the process.” Having been fortunate to work closely with Rudy through The Justinian Society, I firmly agree. ■

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