



## Mark Dellinger

*Senior News* talked with Mark Dellinger of Rhodes, Butler, & Dellinger, PC, as Mark recently became partner in the firm located in Roanoke, serving SW Virginia.

**Senior News:** Your name was recently added to your law firm. How does it feel to be named a partner?

**Mark:** It feels great. I enjoy working with Harry Rhodes and Scott Butler and think we make a good team. I have been with the firm for 5 years, so we know each other well.

**SN:** What will it mean for your clients?

**Mark:** It will not make a difference to clients. For instance,

legal fees will not change. I will continue to treat clients the way I would want to be treated.

**SN:** What are your areas of the law?

**Mark:** Estate planning and administration, which includes wills and trusts, disability planning, which includes powers of attorney, nursing home and assisted living planning, including knowing the Medicaid rules, guardianships and conservatorships, and business law. Except for business law, people sometimes lump those other areas together and call it "Elder Law."

**SN:** Do you have any favorite areas?

**Mark:** Not really... I hope that I make the law easy for people to understand in any of those areas. However, I really like working with families facing long term

care and families of children with special needs, such as mental retardation, autism or the like. A special needs trust is often essential for such a family, but many do not have them.

**SN:** Why do you enjoy working with families of special needs?

**Mark:** I guess because my sister is autistic and I know about being a family member of someone with a challenging condition. It is satisfying to know you are helping to relieve stress in that family and help that person maintain a dignified quality of life.

**SN:** Why did you choose these areas of law?

**Mark:** I chose them because I want to help keep families together and help them maintain their hard-earned savings. Attempting to foresee the problems and lay out plans to avoid them, or lessen their damage, is energizing.

**SN:** So you were once a courtroom lawyer?

**Mark:** Yes, my first six years of practice were 100% litigation for a large firm. In litigation, the parties have already divided and are reactive to each other. The courtroom was fun and I enjoyed the firm, but I was not satisfied.

**SN:** How did you get out of litigation?

**Mark:** I thought about leaving the practice of law to be a psychologist. I realized how important a person's "camera lens on the world" can be and that it can be adjusted. My father suggested I look at areas of law where I could be proactive and constructive to help people.

**SN:** Do you enjoy your work?

**Mark:** I don't just enjoy it — I love it. I know that this is the type of work I am supposed to be doing.

**SN:** That's fantastic and congratulations on making partner!

**Mark:** Thank you — I appreciate that.

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