

KEVIN GOLDEN

No One Outworks This Tenacious PI Advocate

by Dan Rafter

Kevin J. Golden boasts no secret formula for his success. Instead, this managing partner and personal injury attorney in the Chicago office of Dudley & Lake relies on hard work.

As his peers say, there isn't an attorney in the Chicago area who will outwork Golden. And that hard work? It has paid dividends. Golden has obtained multimillion-dollar verdicts throughout the state, including a \$25 million medical malpractice verdict in Cook County in 2009.

Today, Golden is recognized as one of the top litigators in the state. Not only does he prosecute medical malpractice cases, he also focuses on automobile negligence, Section 1983 civil rights, nursing home negligence, premise liability and sexual abuse cases.

And, Golden says, it's putting in the long hours, doing the research and committing to finding the best results for his clients that helped him build a successful career.

"I outwork the opponent. It's all about the work," Golden says. "I was never top of my class in college or law school. But you won't find a lot of attorneys who will outwork me. You have to be aggressive in this field. Things won't just be given to you. What you need is probably out there. You just need to get it and be persistent."

THE POWER OF HARD WORK

This is the same mantra that led Golden to success on the basketball court at DePaul University. Golden played on the 1986-'87 Blue Demons team that went 28-3 and held a top ranking in college basketball through most of the season. The following year, the team went 22-8, and Golden, in his senior year, was named a team captain.

Golden admits that he was far from the most talented player on those DePaul squads. The team featured future NBA players Dallas Comegys and Rod Strickland, after all.

But Golden earned his playing time through hard work. And, as with his law career, it paid off.

"People thought I'd never play at a Division I school," Golden says. "I didn't have the talent of three-fourths of the people on my team. But I never stopped working. It's the same thing



with trial work. People see these large verdicts. But they don't see the work that goes into them. A good trial attorney has a great work ethic. A good trial attorney puts in the time and hours to get those results."

Matthew Walsh of Hinshaw & Culbertson has known Golden since the pair worked as young prosecutors in the Cook County State's Attorney's office. In 2000, their careers diverged. Golden, of course, went to the plaintiff's side. Walsh moved on to the defense side.

But Walsh says one thing never changed: Golden's work ethic and commitment to his clients.

"Kevin is an extremely talented trial lawyer," Walsh says. "While there are many excellent lawyers in Chicago, what allows Kevin to stand apart is his attention to detail and his incredible work ethic."

That work ethic always plays a key role in Golden's success. But Walsh says more than hard work sets Golden apart. He also possesses a shrewd legal mind and is a fierce advocate for his clients.

"Kevin never misses a key fact or an important issue," Walsh says. "And he will always outwork every lawyer in the room."

FAMILIAR WITH COMPETITION

Golden has always been an advocate of hard work. Growing up in Michigan, sports attracted him. He might not have been the most athletic of competitors. But he never shied away from the long hours of practice necessary to succeed.

It's why Golden took a liking to boxing, a sport he still loves. Golden studied the science of the sport and put in the long hours in the gym, fashioning a strong record in a sport about which he was especially passionate.

Golden also played high school basketball and football. He sprouted four inches between his sophomore and junior years. This attracted the attention of colleges, with Golden eventually accepting a scholarship offer from DePaul University.

Today, Golden draws on the lessons he learned in the ring and on the basketball court

for inspiration when he's facing a particularly challenging legal matter.

"Both trial work and athletics are extremely competitive," Golden says. "The competitive nature of trial work has always attracted me. I enjoy putting the work in, working harder than anyone else. I always did that with sports. Being in a courtroom is all about the preparation. It's about getting ready for the trial. I enjoy having to make those split-second decisions during the trial."

Golden began his legal career in 1992, working at the Cook County State's Attorney's office. He remained there until 2000.

Golden was in the office's gang crime unit when he went to the private side of law, taking a position at a personal injury firm in Chicago. Once making this move, he immediately began trying medical malpractice cases. It didn't take long for Golden to earn a string of successful verdicts and settlements for his clients.

His peers noticed. In 2001, Law Bulletin Media named Golden to its "40 Under Forty" list. And in 2004, DePaul University College of Law honored him as the School of Law's Outstanding Young Alumnus.

In 2007, Golden joined the Chicago firm of Dudley & Lake, LLC. His results here have been impressive, too.

In 2009, for instance, Golden and Matt Dudley earned a \$25 million medical malpractice verdict in Cook County. In 2011, Golden obtained an \$8 million settlement on behalf of a 20-year-old man who suffered a brain injury while receiving chemotherapy at Advocate Lutheran General Hospital.

And in 2016, Golden earned a \$3.85 million settlement for a 26-year-old woman who underwent bariatric surgery and suffered from B1 vitamin deficiency after the procedure. The plaintiff suffers from permanent peripheral neuropathy in her lower limbs.

Golden points to the importance of such verdicts and settlements in making his career so satisfying. As a personal injury attorney, he can improve the lives of people who have suffered.

He cites the \$8 million settlement as an example. The young man at the center of that case went into a coma for 10 days. He suffered traumatic injuries. The settlement Golden earned on his behalf didn't change that. But it did allow the client's family to provide him with the best possible medical care and living conditions.

"I saw the extent of what that family went through," Golden says. "When they first came to me, they had no funds to take care of their child. They had no funds to provide proper living conditions or treatment for that child. After the settlement, they were able to properly care for him. I saw how this system can help families like that. You see how the system works and what it is about."

Golden has also worked on several sexual-abuse cases. These cases are difficult. But, again, they provide Golden with the opportunity to make a difference.

"You see people who are abused or taken advantage of because they don't have the money or resources to defend themselves," Golden says. "I went into personal injury law because I wanted to help the underprivileged and people who do need assistance. The good guys in this business do it for a purpose. You get fulfillment out of seeing how you can assist people."

Golden recently took on cases centering on children with special needs who were abused. As Golden says, it rarely gets worse than that in civil law.

The hope, Golden says, is that these cases will bring about not just big verdicts but real changes.

"You hope they will make real changes at schools and churches to make sure these cases don't happen again," he says. "You put the offender away in a criminal case and the same abuse continues because there is not a financial hit or a demand to change. I recently worked on a church case. My clients wanted a statement from the church outlining what is

being changed so that the abuse won't happen again. You hope that these cases do make a difference."

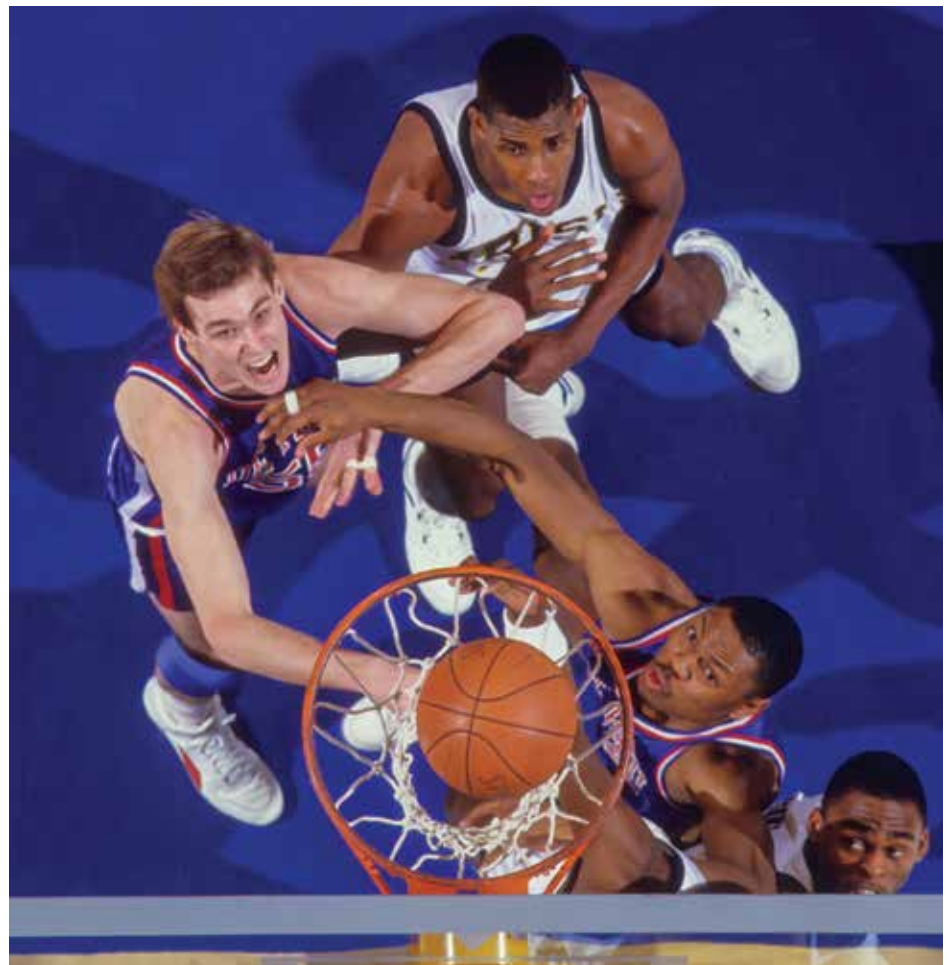
OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES

Building a legal career isn't easy. And all that hard work takes time. For Golden, that's one of the biggest challenges of this career: finding the time.

He credits his wife, Caroline Jamieson Golden, for much of his success. She is an attorney, too, who made the sacrifice to put her own career on hold to stay home for eight years when the couple's three children—a daughter and two sons—were young.

This was critical to his success, Golden says. This period coincided with his transition from the state's attorney's office to private practice.

"I had to bear down and do the hours," Golden says. "My wife was so good about that. I was putting in those 12-hour or 14-hour days. She understood trial work and the demands it places on attorneys. When you are on trial, you aren't going to be at home much. She understood that and supported me. Without her help, I never would have been able to make that move."



Golden appeared in a March 9, 1987, spread in *Sports Illustrated* after Notre Dame upset the 25-1 and sixth-ranked Blue Demons. Also pictured prominently, ND's Donald Royal (above) and DePaul's Dallas Comegys (below)

Today, Caroline is a partner with the Sotos Law Firm in Chicago. Daughter Meghan is a Wisconsin graduate who plans to attend law school, son William is a DePaul sophomore and son John is a junior at Benet Academy in Lisle.

Another career challenge? It can be difficult for attorneys to find the niche in which they want to practice. Fortunately, Golden always knew he wanted to be a trial attorney.

Other lawyers aren't as lucky. They struggle to find their passion, and that makes building a career in law a challenge, says Golden.

"It's so important to find something you are good at and that you like," Golden says. "There are lawyers who do what they do because they need a paycheck. I understand that. But somewhere down the line, you have to discover what it is you want to do. You don't have to be a trial attorney. But you do have to find out what you want to do."

Golden was raised in Michigan. He and his family travel to the state quite frequently, usually to the house the Golden family bought on a lake.

"We go there every weekend we can," Golden says. "I love the outdoors. Our whole family enjoys the outdoors. We've taken our kids to all the national parks. We spend time on the lake. As they get older, it gets harder to coordinate those trips, so we do take advantage of them as often as we can."

Golden is a fan of all sports, and he continues to play basketball. His baseball team is the Chicago White Sox, and he has season tickets for the Bears and Blackhawks. He resumed his boxing career in 1995 and participated in the Chicago Golden gloves boxing tournament.

"I love the game of boxing," he says. "There is so much more to it than people think. It's not just about brawling. You have to think, too, when you are boxing."

Robert Napleton, partner at Chicago's Motherway & Napleton, is also familiar with Golden's work ethic. Golden and he practiced at the same firm from 2001 to 2007. The pair tried seven cases together.

Six of the trials were no-offer medical malpractice cases, Napleton says.

"Kevin was never afraid to roll up his sleeves and try a tough case. The combined offers on those cases were zero. If you add up the verdicts from them, we earned well over \$10 million."

The best word to describe Golden? Napleton says it's "dogged."

"Not only is Kevin highly skilled, and not only is he a team player, but he is passionate and caring, too," says Napleton.

"And he is such a hard worker. He is persistent in all of his efforts on behalf of his clients. He is stubbornly tenacious. He's the pit bull of the trial bar. I would not want to be cross-examined by Kevin." ■



Following the White Sox in 2018 in Seattle, from left, Jackson Carr, son William, Austin Graf, son John, Golden, friend William Carr, father-in-law Mike Jamison Sr., friend David Graf



Golden and Craig Brown, now of Myers & Flowers, pictured years ago after a successful Cook County jury verdict against a drug dealer who was arrested with a kilogram of cocaine.



Golden and wife Caroline Golden with White Sox manager Rick Renteria