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Legendary Lawyer

Ed Garland

In the fight for justice, Ed Garland sometimes feels it's like living in the wild, wild West! Instead of a six-shooter, he brandishes the rule of law . . . and the stakes are always high.

In the highly publicized case of Ray Lewis, the Baltimore linebacker charged with murder, Ed Garland was called to the jail right after the arrest. When he entered the jail lobby he found a line of top attorneys waiting to be interviewed by Lewis and his advisors in what looked to Ed like a cattle call. Ed didn't wait around. He simply handed his card to them, and said, in effect, "I am not waiting to be interviewed, but if you want to get Lewis out of jail, give me a call." They did – and he did – and the murder charges were dismissed.

Ed's firm was originally founded in 1920 by his legendary father,

attorney Reuben Augustus Garland Sr. Today it has evolved into the trial firm of Garland, Samuel & Loeb, P.C. The firm has 10 attorneys, seven representing criminal defendants and three handling major civil plaintiff's litigation, making it one of the largest and most prestigious law firms in the Southeast that daily defends citizens accused of crimes. Ed said, "We are able to bring a team of lawyers to a client's aid if the case demands it. The firm is composed of what is widely regarded as the dream team of the best of the best." Ed's partner, Don Samuel, is also recognized as a legal scholar, author and accomplished trial lawyer.

Q&A

YOUR FATHER, REUBEN A GARLAND (WHO PRACTICED FOR 60 YEARS, BEGINNING IN 1920), TRAVELED THE BACK ROADS OF GEORGIA DEFENDING MANY POOR CLIENTS – OFTEN SAVING THEM FROM "MOB JUSTICE." HOW INSTRUMENTAL WAS HE IN YOUR DECISION TO BECOME AN ATTORNEY? WHAT'S THE MOST VALUABLE LESSON HE TAUGHT YOU ABOUT DEFENDING THE ACCUSED?

My father taught me to be passionate, fearless and dedicated to the defense of my clients. He inspired me to value every human life and to revere the awesome responsibility of representing someone in the fight for justice. My father was sent to jail seven times during

the course of his career for contempt during his heated courtroom battles. Every time he went to jail, the client was acquitted. I am actually the sixth generation in my family to practice law, and my son, John, who joined the firm in 2004, is the seventh.

HOW DO YOU DEFEND SOMEONE WHO YOU BELIEVE OR KNOW TO BE GUILTY?

My job is not to pass judgment – that's for the jury or the judge. I make the system work. If every person who is accused of a crime has their rights protected by a fair and honest system, then the personal freedoms of all Americans are safe. Criminal defense

lawyers save innocent citizens from false charges every day in this country – most recently the Duke LaCrosse case. My goal is, without trickery or falsity, to make the prosecution prove the charges beyond a reasonable doubt. When you defend an accused that the community condemns, your skin has to be thick enough not to care what the public thinks of you. The criminal defense lawyer is liberty's last champion.

WHAT ABOUT AN INNOCENT CLIENT?

When I believe a client is innocent, I often feel a terror of failure. This fear actually gives me an edge. I am personally driven to prove



WILLIE JACOBS

WHEN IT COMES TO DUELING IT OUT WITH THE LAW, ED GARLAND IS QUICK ON THE DRAW, DEFENDING HIS CLIENTS WITH SHARP-SHOOTING SMARTS IN THE FIGHT FOR JUSTICE.

their innocence. As with every case, a lawyer has to be tenacious through preparation, research, investigation and reflection. The trial of a case consumes all of my energy.

IN YOUR FOUR DECADES OF PRACTICING LAW, YOUR FIRM HAS SUCCESSFULLY REPRESENTED SUCH HIGH-PROFILE CLIENTS AS RAY LEWIS (MURDER CHARGES AGAINST HIM WERE DROPPED MID-WAY THROUGH HIS 2001 TRIAL) AND NHL STAR DANY HEATLEY, NFL RUNNING BACK JAMAL LEWIS AND MANY OTHERS. WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT VICTORY?

Those cases in which I have been able to prevent the wrongful indictment of

innocent citizens. Those are cases no one knows about. Those have been some of my proudest moments.

WHAT CHANGES HAVE YOU SEEN IN THE LEGAL SYSTEM OVER THE COURSE OF YOUR CAREER?

The greatest change is the explosion of arrests of citizens for using drugs as a result of the so-called "War on Drugs." This is a war that was lost many years ago. The severe punishments are needlessly destroying lives that otherwise could be productive. Our society's approach is stupid, costs billions in enforcement and confinement, and will never

work. The second major change is the impact of computers and the Internet. You now find the law on the Internet instantaneously, almost making books obsolete. E-mails have substantially replaced letters, and pleadings are filed electronically.

WHAT DO YOU DO IN YOUR LEISURE TIME? IS RETIREMENT ON THE HORIZON?

I enjoy going to the ocean, sailing and hiking. My wife and I also like to entertain at our home. Retirement seems pointless to me. I think there's no better way to spend my time than on my life's work.