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Someone you should know· Pat Driscoll, Cook County State's Attorney's Office

By Karen Dimond

If you ask you Pat Driscoll about his legal career, he will say, "It's really not that interesting." But he may acknowledge that one day in 1970 was fairly exciting when, while serving as a Felony Trial Assistant State's Attorney, he was taken hostage at 26th and California by convicted murderer Gene Lewis, who was armed with a revolver his girlfriend had sneaked into the courtroom, inside a hollowed-out law book. Lewis tried to escape from the courthouse, and he seized Driscoll and his partner as hostages on the way out of their courtroom. Lewis was shot dead in the hallway outside of the courtroom. Driscoll escaped unharmed and has continued practicing law for another interesting, although not quite as exciting, 40 years.

Driscoll was born in Chicago, went to Loyola Academy and then to Regis College in Denver, Colorado. Driscoll realized that he was "not good at math or science, but could write well." So, after Driscoll graduated from Regis College in 1964, he followed in his father's footsteps and went to law school.

At DePaul Law School, his classmates included a future alderman, congressman, state senator and mayor: Ed Burke, Marty Russo, Howard Carroll and Richard M. Daley. Driscoll himself became involved in politics in the 49th Ward in Rogers Park, but by his own admission, he was the "world's worst precinct captain."

Despite the lack of a political sponsor, Driscoll was hired by the Cook County State's Attorney's Office at a time when Assistant State's Attorneys were generally required to produce annual letters of sponsorship. Driscoll credits State's Attorney Bernie Carey with ending that practice in 1972.

When Driscoll joined the office in 1968 there were only about 200 Assistant State's Attorneys, though the staff would eventually swell to include over 900 Assistant State's Attorneys before recent budget cuts shrank it back to a smaller size. Driscoll acknowledges that when he joined the office that almost all Assistant State's Attorneys were white men. There were so few women (exactly two) that Driscoll remembered both of them: Blanche Manning and Barb Davis.

Over the ensuing years, Driscoll worked in Criminal Appeals, the First Municipal District, and the Felony Trial Division. In 1973, he became Chief of the Criminal Appeals Division. Driscoll watched the volume and type of cases expand, the Criminal Code change, and the State's Attorney's Office grow to include a felony review unit, a child support enforcement unit, and a public interest bureau. Future judges Tom Fitzgerald, Paul Biebel, James Zagel, and Joel Flaum, along with future State Senate President Phil Rock, were among the members of the State's Attorney's Office at that time.

However, by 1975, Driscoll decided it was time to leave the fifth floor of the Daley Center and struck out across the Daley Plaza to 77 W. Washington Street to work with Joe Roddy, also a former Assistant State's Attorney. Their work included

criminal defense, civil litigation and insurance defense. Driscoll represented the Confederation of Police and individual police officers who were subject to possible discipline. In 1977, Driscoll opened his own office, and in 1995 he helped found the five-member firm, Hickey, Driscoll, Kurfirst, Patterson and Melia.

But throughout these years of private practice, Driscoll continued to serve the public through his service on the Federal Defender Program and through his many appointments as a Special State's Attorney and as a Special Assistant State's Attorney. For example, in the case of *O'Grady v. Merit Board*, a contempt matter heard in the circuit and appellate courts, Driscoll was appointed a Special State's Attorney to represent the Merit Board and its members Bob Novelle and Arthur Waddy. Driscoll also represented Justice Pat Quinn in a civil rights suit. In a significant real estate tax case, Driscoll served as one of Ford Motor Company's lawyers in the trial court, appellate court and Illinois Supreme Court. Ultimately, the Supreme Court held that in the absence of fraud, the courts had no power to review the value of property set by the tax assessor.

Some of the criminal defendants Driscoll represented include Ferris Walker, whose conviction and death sentence Driscoll managed to get reversed and remanded, although Walker did get a 75-year sentence after the remand. Driscoll also represented Andy Kokorealis on Cook County charges, where the jury spared his life. However, Kokorealis received the death sentence in 1999 in DuPage County, where the Public Defender represented him. Kokorealis became the last man executed in Illinois before the George Ryan moratorium.

While Driscoll had some interesting clients in private practice, he does not miss some aspects of private practice such as traveling, administrative headaches, trying to collect fees from clients, and worrying about paying staff and overhead costs. Driscoll observed that criminal defense work did not usually bring repeat business.

So, in 1999, when Driscoll's high school friend, State's Attorney Dick Devine, called to ask Driscoll to come back to the State's Attorney's Office as Bureau Chief of the Civil Actions Bureau, Driscoll accepted. Driscoll has held that position ever since.

Driscoll often tells new Assistant State's Attorneys that their job is the best job they will ever have—as long as they can afford it. He explains that the experience is priceless. Driscoll himself has argued 25 cases in the Illinois Supreme Court plus many more in the appellate court. In the trial courts, he has had an opportunity to handle some of the most interesting cases arising in the public sector. He works closely with the Cook County Board and county officials, who depend upon his advice. Perhaps, what gives Driscoll his unique perspective is that he has spent twenty years in public service *and* over 20 years in private practice.

Driscoll says that he likes what he does, the people he works with, the camaraderie of his staff, and the shared goals and mission of the State's Attorney's Office. He finds his work challenging and professionally rewarding.

In addition to holding a demanding and time-consuming position, Driscoll is active in many bar associations and not-for-profit organizations. Driscoll has chaired the ISBA's Unauthorized Practice of Law Section Council, the Criminal Justice Section Council, the Standing Committee of Government Lawyers, and the Federal Civil Practice Section Council. He also served on the Special ISBA Committee on the Death Penalty, and other committees. He has served eight terms in the Assembly of the ISBA.

Driscoll has also served on many CBA Committees including Membership, Criminal Law, Defense of Prisoners, Tort Law, and the Judicial Evaluation Committee. He is a former Appellate Lawyers Association Board member and is a Federal Bar Association board member. He has served on and chaired an ARDC Hearing Board, and he has worked on many other committees too numerous to mention.

Outside of the legal field, Driscoll has also served on the Board of Trustees of the Norwegian American Hospital and spent three years as its chairman. Driscoll lives in Glenview with his wife, who teaches Irish step-dancing and who is a former school teacher. Driscoll has four children and nine grandchildren. He enjoys vacationing at his second home in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

The Standing Committee on Government Lawyers is proud to call Pat one of our own and truly someone you should know.



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