

ATTORNEYS OF SOUTHWESTERN ILLINOIS

Interests, upbringing cultivate partner's career at HeplerBroom

By ROBERTA CODEMO

Eric Hall is not your typical attorney. A former amateur boxer and metal musician, he came into the legal profession through a love of movies such as "A Time To Kill" and "The Devil and Daniel Webster."

"It seemed like an interesting profession," he said. "It's something that allows for compelling arguments with interesting fact patterns."

An only child, he grew up in Mattoon, the son of a fireman and a homemaker, and credits his parents with instilling in him the values of education and hard work. He recalls his grandmother was very bright and was valedictorian of her high school class. She worked on a farm and was very self-sufficient and resilient.

"She was not someone you cried around," Hall recalls. One of the stories he recounted was a time when he was kicked by a horse and she told him: "I told you not to get in its way."

His parents always encouraged him to expand on his talents, and growing up he played music and wrote poetry. A high school athlete, he played baseball, track, basketball and golf and wanted to play for the Raiders when he got older. Through sports he developed a tough skin and learned that hard work results in success, skills he carries into the courtroom today as a trial attorney for HeplerBroom LLC in Edwardsville.

After high school, he attended the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and graduated in 1997 with a degree

in English.

"I loved literature, particularly the classics," he said, describing himself as a wordsmith. He enjoys writing and reading the works of Shakespeare and Poe.

He attended Southern Illinois University

and invited to come to Madison County and join the HeplerBroom firm.

Madison County has long been known for its large "asbestos docket" that handles a high volume of asbestos filings, and there was a need for attorneys willing

Asbestos Medicine.

He enjoys what he does and believes a good trial attorney needs to have intellectual ability, fearlessness and courage. Courage is not about being afraid but having the willingness to do

something uncomfortable that you don't want to do. It's the willingness to put yourself into difficult situations where you might lose. "That's important for doing trial work," he said.

In the courtroom, an attorney must understand legal argument and be able to present a defense and not be intimidated to attack the other side and respond to questions from the judge. His career as a boxer has taught him to be able to throw punches and to

take punches thrown back at him, while his career as a musician has made him comfortable with public speaking and a better representative in front of a jury.

Named Best Lawyers in America and Illinois Super Lawyer, he believes in giving back to the community and devotes his time to providing pro bono legal work to area amateur boxers and trainers. He is a member of the NAACP and co-chair of the diversity committee at HeplerBroom.

Outside the courtroom, Hall is a professional musician performing vocals and playing various instruments in a metal band and is a voting member of the Recording Academy (Grammy Awards). If he was not an attorney, he would probably be touring as a full-time musician.

He lives in Edwardsville.



Eric Hall

Law School at Carbondale and graduated with his juris doctorate degree in 2001. In college, he was the editor of the Southern Illinois University Law Review and an amateur boxer, retiring from the sport at the age of 34.

It wasn't until law school that he first developed a deep interest in the legal process. Except for watching his parents go through the arbitration process after buying a lemon car when he was young, he had no real ties to the legal profession.

While in law school, he clerked for the Hatch Law Firm in Champaign and joined the general practice firm after graduation and stayed until 2003. He credits Lawrence and Bill Hatch for helping shape him into the attorney he is today.

He was there when he was approached by a few of his former law school classmates

to go into the courtroom and try cases.

"There was a need for attorneys to defend a vast array of companies against lawsuits," said Hall, who has been with HeplerBroom for the past 15 years.

After joining HeplerBroom, he has risen through the ranks and among his key mentors at the firm has been Jeffrey Hebrank. Now a partner, Hall focuses his practice in the areas of toxic torts, product liability and personal injury. His main focus remains asbestos defense.

Working on asbestos cases, he finds developing complex scientific medical defenses most interesting, and he has spent many years developing, defending and conducting examinations of expert witnesses in deposition and at trial. He often speaks and writes about these topics at legal seminars such as the DRI



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