

Thirty-Year Member's Gift Reflects Dedication to Legal Education

Gift Will Create a Tom Segalla Chair in DRI's Law Institute

On May 24, 2013, Tom Segalla and his wife Mary Lou made an extraordinary gift of \$100,000 to DRI that will be used for the benefit of the organization. Among other things, the gift establishes a named chair called the Tom Segalla Chair of the Law Institute that will be held by future chairpersons of that entity. In addition, DRI will establish an annual Excellence in Education Award in honor of the Segallas' generosity. The organization is considering the establishment of a foundation to steward, distribute, and increase the funds.

"What an extraordinarily generous gesture this is from someone who has already given so much to DRI," said DRI president Mary Mas-saron Ross. "It has been a personal pleasure for me to have worked with Tom, and to have benefited from his wisdom and experience over the years, and to have become friends with Mary Lou. And I know that I speak for all the officers, past presidents, board members, and leadership when I say that he has been a hugely influential leader within DRI, and has set the standard for excellence in education that we will be honoring with this new award."

A printed compilation of his activities since becoming a DRI member in 1980 covers more than seven pages. He has been a member of more than three dozen committees, boards, and task forces and served DRI as a member of our board of directors.

a model for Tom's life. Tom was recently given all of his childhood school records by his primary and secondary education school district. If there was a common evaluative refrain that ran throughout the 12 years of early schooling it was recognition of Tom as a

hard worker with leadership capabilities. Those qualities earned him degrees from the University of Miami and SUNY at Buffalo School of Law. He is the first and only lawyer in his family.

Tom's motto, both in his life and for DRI is "visibility, creativity, persistence." Visibility enhances professional viability; creativity establishes uniqueness; and only through persistence are goals achieved.

Tom Segalla is a senior trial partner in the firm of Goldberg Segalla LLP in Buffalo, New

York, where he is co-chair of the firm's Global Insurance Services Practice Group. His litigation practice is largely devoted to the defense of general insurance and coverage matters, labor law, bad faith and fraud, and environmental and toxic tort matters. He has served as an expert witness in 111 "bad faith" cases across the country and spoken or written on related matters on scores of occasions.



Tom and Mary Lou Segalla in Prague during the Spring 2013 DRI Board of Directors Meeting.

He has written many scholarly articles for DRI publications, spoken at 26 DRI seminars, and attended more than 130 major gatherings and seminars over his years as a DRI member.

Although born in Massachusetts, Tom was raised in western Connecticut. His father, born of a hard-working Italian family from a small town outside Florence, Italy, had a tremendous work ethic that became



Above: Tom notes that widespread involvement in DRI played a critical role in the rapid growth of his firm, which he co-founded in 2001 alongside former DRI President Neil Goldberg.

Left: DRI President Mary Massaron Ross with Tom and Mary Lou Segalla as they wrap up the May board meeting, during which the Segallas presented DRI with a \$100,000 gift.



Tom initially came to DRI when, after successfully handling a number of asbestos cases in New York, he stumbled upon a DRI insurance seminar in New York City. Shortly thereafter, he joined DRI and became a member of its Insurance Law Committee.

He credits DRI with helping him develop as a professional and as a lawyer. He sees his DRI membership as instrumental in growing his law practice. By raising his “visibility” (one of Tom’s key words) through fellowship and networking with other DRI lawyers and using the opportunities of writing and

speaking at seminars, his client base was developed and solidified.

Thus, it was the affinity for DRI and its members, nurtured over 30 years and shared by Mary Lou that led to their generous gift. His hopes for it are that it will help to create great lawyers and professionals for the defense bar through peerless education products and opportunities.

Tom has authored several leading law textbooks, including the seminal insurance law treatise *Couch on Insurance 3d*. Mr. Segalla’s other honors include his selection for inclusion in *Best Lawyers in Amer-*

ica 2013 and *The International Who’s Who of Insurance & Reinsurance Lawyers*. In addition, he was recently named *Best Lawyers’* 2014 Buffalo Insurance Law “Lawyer of the Year.”

“Even with 30 years under his belt, I expect Tom to be involved with DRI for a long time to come,” said DRI Executive Director John R. Kouris. “Anyone who is worried that this may preface some kind of retirement need only look to Tom’s father, an acrobatic pilot who only recently quit flying...at 88.”

