



PHOTO SUBMITTED BY JOHN HAGER

■ JOHN F. HAGER

## Giving clients equal treatment in the law

**T**hey didn't hire a PR firm to create the tagline "Relationships Matter." Rather, the named partners at Hager, Dewick & Zuengler S.C. in Green Bay just sat down and brainstormed about their personal and professional values.

One of Hager's first mentors in the legal profession told him, "Rest assured we will always operate with the highest ethical principles, even when we are dealing with people who are not so inclined." He took it to heart.

Hager is a business and estate planning attorney. He has handled complex, international \$90 million business transactions. He has cobbled together merger and acquisition deals in excess of \$10 million. He has prepared estate plans for people worth tens of millions of dollars. He has written simple wills for individuals with few assets. All of these clients were treated equally.

In a profession where the billable hour still reigns supreme, Hager doesn't mind chatting with an elderly client about her grandchildren. He doesn't bill her for it, either.

He thought he'd work in-house as a new lawyer, but there were no openings at the legal department at the Miller Brewery where he clerked (He took advantage of some exceptional discounts on cases, he notes). Instead he entered private practice and now knows it was for the best. He's a people person and would've missed out on a lot of client contact.

Hager works hard — always has. He completed his undergraduate degree in just three years, and earned his CPA designation as a law student, while graduating in the top 10 percent. He spends every Sunday night at his firm, getting a jump on the week's work. "I should probably work less than I do, but I'm having so much darn fun that I can't stop," he confesses. "Plus, the older I get, the more I've fallen into the role of advisor, and I really enjoy that."

Instead of talking about himself, Hager prefers to discuss the organizations to which he donates dozens of hours annually, his children (one's at Marquette University Law School; the other's finishing up her nursing degree at Marquette; and number three is enrolling there next fall), or his wife of 29 years who works (volunteer) at a local public school. He coached practically every sport offered at his children's elementary school.

Incidentally, he doesn't want to win the lottery. He feels like he already has.

■ JANE PRIBEK

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### JOHN F. HAGER

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Education:

Marquette University,  
accounting, 1979;  
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Law School, J.D., 1982

Current Employment:

Hager, Dewick  
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Affiliations:

St. Vincent and St. Mary  
Hospitals; Green Bay Area  
Chamber of Commerce Healthy  
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Area Chamber of Commerce CEO  
Roundtable program; Notre Dame  
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