

COLUMBUS
BUSINESS FIRSTAlvin McKenna *Porter Wright Morris & Arthur LLP*The **2014** Central
Ohio
Lawyers
of the year

While the technology and processes change, people seek out lawyers for the same reasons they did when attorney Alvin McKenna entered the field in the 1960s.

"They just want to see their problems resolved," said the partner at Porter Wright Morris & Arthur LLP.

McKenna is being honored by Best Lawyers in the category of Employment Law – Management, which constitutes a large portion of his caseload, although his practice delves into many areas.

In the world of employment law, McKenna said company managers are always confronted with new angles but the gist of issues they must contend with remains centered around areas of equal treatment, race and fair labor standards.

"It really hasn't changed all that much," said McKenna, who began his career at Porter Wright in 1986 after the firm merged with his employer law firm Alexander Ebinger Fisher & Lawrence.

One big change, he said, is the impact technology and social media especially are having on commerce and employers. Companies across the country continue to grapple with social media use in the workplace, attempting to solidify what practices are acceptable or not.

"Employers who fail to get a handle on this area create both business and legal exposure in a myriad of areas, including those of no-compete clauses/agreements and theft of trade secrets; National Labor Relations Board matters related to organizing and protected concerted issues; and Fair Labor Standards Act matters involving timekeeping and homework issues ..."

A New Orleans native, McKenna decided upon law school when he realized he didn't want to exercise the undergraduate degree in chemistry from the college he attended in western New York. Finding himself as a go-to attorney for employment law issues wasn't planned either.

"I had some litigation experience and one case in that area involved a labor issue. And through the years it just kind of grew," he said.



Employers who fail to get a handle on this area create both business and legal exposure in a myriad of areas

Address: 41 S. High St., Suite 2800, Columbus

Phone: 614-227-1945

Website: www.porterwright.com

Best Lawyers category: Employment Law – Management

Education: Bachelor of Arts, Canisius College, 1963; J.D., University of Notre Dame Law School, 1966

Organizations: Notre Dame Law School Advisory Council; Judicial Conference of the U.S. 6th Circuit Court of Appeals; Gahanna Community Urban Redevelopment Corp.; and American, Ohio State, Columbus and Federal bar associations

Interests/Hobbies: Gardening; following college football and basketball; and mentoring

young attorneys at Porter Wright and students at the Notre Dame Law School Chapter of the Black Law Students Association

First paid job: Working 12-hour days for two weeks straight at the age of 15 running a grocery store by himself for the owner who was away on a family emergency. I was paid \$50 for the two weeks.

A lesson the client taught you: I learned early on through work with investigators from federal agencies during my work as an assistant U.S. attorney ... that it takes the joint effort and contributions of both an attorney and the client to produce the result which best serves the client.

Favorite historical figure & why: Priests of the Society of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart – the Josephites – who, in the early 1950s, set up

and staffed St. Augustine High School in New Orleans as part of their mission to minister to minorities despite what then was a divided and oftentimes tense racial atmosphere.

Perfect meal: Going back to my upbringing in New Orleans, it would be red beans and rice with New Orleans hot chaurice sausage.

Finish this sentence: The expansion of technology has made the practice of law more efficient, expeditious, and effective in terms of research and preparation of positions, presentations, responses, and communications, but it does have the drawback of lessening in-person contacts which can make valuable contributions to achieving desired results.

If I weren't a lawyer, I would be: A teacher