



David P. Buckley, Jr. and Andrew J. Kelleher, Jr. are the founding partners of Kelleher & Buckley, LLC.

## A Few Good Men

TWENTY YEARS AGO, TWO LIFELONG BARRINGTON RESIDENTS TEAMED UP TO START A LOCAL LAW FIRM IN THE HEART OF BARRINGTON. HERE'S A LOOK BACK AT THEIR BEGINNING AND WHERE THEIR FIRM IS TODAY.

**T**ODAY, THE CLIENT BASE of the Kelleher & Buckley law firm covers the greater Barrington area, as well as Chicago and Naples, Fla. The firm's five-year strategic planning is in the works, with new locations such as Scottsdale, Ariz., under consideration with a sole focus of affording its clients access to the best possible service.

Kelleher & Buckley offers high-level, quality legal services to all of its clients—whether they are a major corporation, an upstart business, a multi-generation family, or an individual needing legal advice for the

first time. They now have seven law practices—Business, Trusts & Estates, Litigation & Personal Injury, Tax and Wealth Structuring, Family Law & Divorce, Employment, and Real Estate and Financing. Their planning for steady and consistent growth from the early days of more than 20 years ago has proven its case, when the career paths of two young lawyers, Andy Kelleher and David Buckley, aligned.

“Dave and I first got to know each other on the train, while sharing and discussing legal and tax topics; we were both in law school and studying for the

Bar,” Kelleher says. “Over that time, we developed a friendship, probably better defined as a *trustship*, as we mutually realized that there was a decent and intelligent person on the other end of the conversations.” After the two graduated from law school and were working with law firms, they continued sharing articles and technical information. The topics of their camaraderie grew to include church, family, career, and lifetime goals.

Kelleher, a Saint Viator High School alumnus, graduated from DePaul University Chicago in 1990 with a degree in accountancy. He also obtained his CPA and Masters of Laws in Taxation (with honors) while in law school. David Buckley, who graduated from Barrington High School, earned his degree in accounting and finance with a minor in political science from Miami University in Ohio. He passed the entire CPA the first time in 1990. Buckley was working in public accounting and attending law school at

night for a few years, then switched to full-time school finishing in three years at the top of his class. He worked as an associate attorney at Schiff Hardin & Waite for a few years in estate planning, tax, and corporate practice groups.

For three years in a row, the two attorneys ran into each other at the Estate Planning Short Course in Chicago and sat together for lunch. “We discussed where we were working, and what we liked and didn’t like, about our jobs,” Buckley says. “The third year, we decided at the lunch to start our own firm, and skipped the afternoon session to go look for office space. We drove out to the Barrington White House and signed a lease to rent two offices on the second floor.”

“It was an epiphany for us,” Kelleher said. “It was apparent that we both shared similar moral compasses. We realized that we wanted to own our own business and control the day-to-day quality of our lives. On the same day we left early from the continuing education course in Chicago, we met with our wives in the evening, cut the deal, and started Kelleher & Buckley. The practice was formally operational on May 12, 1997,” he said.

### A PHILOSOPHY OF STEADY GROWTH

“Early in our legal careers, we saw other professional service firms expand too quickly, only to implode,” Kelleher said, “so Dave and I quickly adopted a business philosophy based on maxims such as the *client’s best interests always come first, be thankful, the road to success is a marathon and not a sprint, and nothing replaces old-fashioned hard work.*”

For the first several years, Kelleher & Buckley was based in the Barrington Realty Building, known today as Barrington’s White House following its renovation. “The early days were a lot of fun,” Buckley said. “I had work from Schiff to support cases that I was involved in, and Andy had several cases from the DuPage County public guardian. We were able to use those cases to support us while we built our estate planning practice.”

“It was an exciting time to build a practice,” Buckley says, “as the local landscape was changing with the many new financial institutions moving to Barrington.” The partner’s focus on estate planning and tax law, to build their practice, had the cachet and problem-solving muscle they needed. “We loved the satisfaction of the never-ending challenges of unraveling and solving complex estate and tax planning puzzles,” Kelleher said. “For the purposes of being with family and lifestyle, we could have control over our calendars. In 1997, estate planning was hot, and it allowed Dave and me the opportunity to support our growing families and pay the mortgage,” he says.

### THE GOLDEN RULE

Most of the firm’s early clients needed estate planning services, but over time, as the clients’ needs grew, Kelleher & Buckley’s capabilities and ability to serve grew as well. “We’ve worked hard to expand our practice with quality and experienced attorneys,” Buckley says. “Many have been with us from the early part of their careers.”

It is top-notch talent and the high standards of the two founding partners that helps to keep clients coming back throughout their lives. “We consistently strive to provide excellent legal services, focusing on solutions as opposed to blame or problems,” Kelleher says. “We don’t cut corners, are always prepared, and provide the best resources to our clients. Most of all is the golden rule of never prescribing advice to a client that we wouldn’t take ourselves. Adhering to these maxims has served us well and has been foundational to our success.”

.....  
*Kelleher & Buckley LLC is located at 102 S. Wynstone Dr. in North Barrington. To learn more, visit [www.kelleherbuckley.com](http://www.kelleherbuckley.com), or call 847-382-9130.*



The Kelleher & Buckley Estate Planning & Administration Group is (in front) Martha McHugh, Bob Holland, Linda Fine, and Michael McElroy. In back: Nicole Arnold, Vas Russis. Not pictured: Caroline Hecht. (Not pictured: Joe Hudetz, Real Estate Group.)



The Kelleher & Buckley Corporate Group is (in front) Henry “Skip” Tonigan, Keith Zerman, and Vas Russis. In back: Nicole Arnold, Michael McElroy, Helmut Gerlach, Robin Kelleher, Michael Gnesin, and Andrew Fuller. Not pictured: Warren Fuller, Robert Krug, and Ronald Kowalczyk.



The Kelleher & Buckley Litigation Group is (from left) Michael McElroy, Vas Russis, Sam Weyers, Henry “Skip” Tonigan, and Andrew Fuller. Not pictured: Warren Fuller, Robert Krug, and Ray Rudnick.

Tax & Wealth: The Kelleher & Buckley Tax & Wealth Structuring Group helps clients to maximize what they and their families keep after paying the taxes that they owe. Through effective structuring and planning, clients can often dramatically reduce the taxes that they and their families owe, ensuring that more of the income they have generated, and wealth that has been created, is available to benefit the ones they love.