

# RYAN KROMHOLZ & MANION

**RKM.** The sign proudly welcomes visitors, clients, and employees to a modern new law office located in Waukesha County on the west end of Capitol Drive in what used to be a farm field.

The initials represent Ryan Kromholz & Manion, S.C., a firm established by three Marquette lawyers—**Daniel D. Ryan, L'78, Joseph A. Kromholz, L'89, and John M. Manion L'93**—whose practice encompasses all areas of intellectual property, including United States and foreign patent, trademark, copyright, trade secret, and unfair competition law and related litigation.

What drew them to the partnership may have been, in part, a common alma mater, but what keeps them together is an obvious mutual respect. “I think the fact that Joe, John, and I have all been nurtured to some extent by the spirit and philosophy of Marquette Law School provides an unspoken unity of purpose and outlook on life that also unite us as friends and business partners,” said Ryan.

## Daniel Ryan

Daniel Ryan earned his bachelor's degree in engineering in 1969 from the United States Coast Guard Academy and served in the Coast Guard until he entered Marquette Law School in 1975. While in law school, he realized that he could merge his prior life experiences as an engineer with law by practicing patent law.

“I practiced patent law with Michael Best & Friedrich LLP for three years after graduation,” explained Ryan, “then took an in-house corporate position with Baxter Healthcare Corporation in Deerfield, Illinois. I was a patent counsel for the company's blood-products/transfusion-therapies group and its dialysis products group.” He spent seven years with Baxter and returned to Milwaukee and private practice in 1987. Ryan joined and later became the owner of a patent law practice, which was one-half of the breakup of the Wheeler Law Firm in Milwaukee.

This is when a remarkable aligning of circumstances wrote the script for what was to become RKM. “Unbeknownst to me, Joe Kromholz and John Manion had, in a parallel universe,

become the owners of the other half of the Wheeler Law Firm,” Ryan recalled. Kromholz and Manion competed with Ryan for several years. “Then, one momentous day, we started down a mutual courtship, which—a couple years later—resulted in the formation of Ryan Kromholz & Manion. Basically, we put the firm back together.”

Ryan's expertise is in the technologies relating to medical products. “One of the rewarding professional aspects of my job is to talk with people whose lives have been transformed by the medical products developed by companies I've served. To see how medical products can change the quality of a person's life for the better is a humbling experience. It's also ‘Jesuit’ in spirit in a real-world way.”

Ryan has been married to his wife, Mary, for 36 years, and they have two grown sons—Daniel and Sean. “The most rewarding experience in my life has been the unqualified support and love of my wife and children,” said Ryan. “Nothing is possible without that.”

## Joseph Kromholz

After graduating from Carroll College in 1984 with degrees in chemistry and history, Joseph Kromholz decided to enter law school in pursuit of a legal career that would allow him to practice in the field of intellectual property.

In addition to being a registered patent attorney, Kromholz is in charge of the firm's litigation department. His more than 15 years of litigation experience has afforded him the opportunity to help clients enforce their patent rights as well as defend against charges of infringement. “We work not only to protect our clients' interests in litigation, but also to position our clients to avoid litigation in the first place.”

Kromholz believes that those holding a law degree from Marquette have several advantages. “Marquette graduates are well respected in the community for their knowledge and understanding of the law, as well as their practical experience. This kind of respect and anticipation is very positive to those practicing law and has benefited our firm. I have benefited from this as well,” he said.

“Marquette University Law School has a stellar program

that encourages students to learn both from books as well as real-life experiences,” he said. His own time as a law student was marked with several interesting experiences. “I recall that as a participant in the Legal Clinic for the Elderly, I was asked to defend an elderly man of limited means. A company was threatening to sue him and hold him responsible because he had signed for the delivery of an artificial limb to be temporarily used by his roommate, who died before it could be returned. I asked the company whether it would release my client if I told the company where it could find the limb. And, although they were not very happy to learn that the limb was buried with my client's roommate, they did release my client!”

Kromholz and his wife, Marjorie, have a four-year-old son who brings “great energy, curiosity, laughter, and joy” into their lives. “He challenges us each day with questions that require skill—and in some cases, research—to answer!”

## John M. Manion

While John Manion was an undergraduate student in the Marquette University College of Engineering, he participated in the college's co-op program and worked with Briggs & Stratton Corporation. After graduating in 1989, he accepted a position with Briggs as a product design engineer. “Shortly thereafter,” Manion explained, “I became acquainted with patents and the patent process. The idea of witnessing emerging technologies and working with others to help protect their discoveries and inventions was very appealing to me.” It was then that he decided to attend law school.

During law school Manion worked as a law clerk at the Wheeler Law Firm. “Allan Wheeler became my mentor and taught me the practical aspects of patent and trademark prosecution. For this I will always be grateful.” Upon graduation from



*Daniel Ryan, Joseph Kromholz, and John Manion*

Marquette Law School in 1993, Manion accepted a position as an associate with the firm, thereupon finding himself practicing with Wheeler & Kromholz in 1994, Wheeler Kromholz & Manion in 1995, and, finally, Ryan Kromholz & Manion, S.C. since 1998.

“Since that time, Dan Ryan, Joe Kromholz, and I have built our firm with a philosophy of bringing younger attorneys into the firm and making a significant commitment to each of them in terms of training. Marquette Law School has an outstanding intellectual property law curriculum, and the program and the quality of its graduates, who have immersed themselves in these courses, have certainly shortened the time it typically takes for a new attorney to become proficient.”

Manion and his wife, Lorelle, have three young sons and they enjoy traveling and spending time with family.

RKM actively recruits law clerks and associates from Marquette University Law School, but that is not the extent of the firm's involvement in the school. Ryan, Kromholz, and Manion are all members of the Woolsack Society, and members of the firm have also found time to help prepare intellectual property moot court teams at the school. They may have graduated in three different decades, but each is committed to Marquette Law School today.