

# THE DAILY RECORD

WESTERN NEW YORK'S SOURCE FOR LAW, REAL ESTATE, FINANCE AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE SINCE 1908

## Thomas Fink

### Davidson Fink LLP

A 1957 graduate of Cornell Law School, Thomas Fink wasted little time in becoming a fierce advocate for his clients.

As a founding member and president of the Rochester Committee for Scientific Information, in 1964 he worked with University of Rochester and Geneseo scientists to demonstrate that the City of Rochester's combined water and sewer system was causing contamination at Lake Ontario beaches. The work resulted in a bond issue to separate the systems, and cleaner lake shores.

He has been a vigorous proponent of affordable housing, and in 1968 helped to found the Tempco Development Corporation, which develops transitional and permanent housing for families requiring emergency housing through the Monroe County Department of Social Services. The company originally was sponsored by the Social Action Committee of Temple B'rith Kodesh, of which Fink served as chairman three times.)

He received an Ibero-American Action League Inc. award for service to the Hispanic community in 1988 and a 1999 Community Award from the Puerto Rican Youth Development and Resource Center Inc.

Fink also has served the state and national Democratic party well, holding a variety of leadership roles through the years and having served as a member of the Electoral College pledged to William Jefferson Clinton in 1996. In 2009, he was inducted into the Monroe County Democratic Committee Hall of Fame.

**Q:** How do you ensure justice for your clients? Is that goal always obtainable?



VASILY BAZILUK

**A:** I believe that I participate in a system of dispute resolution, not necessarily a system of justice. From time to time, we lawyers get the opportunity of truly being involved in issues relating to justice as commanded by the Prophet Isaiah, "Justice, justice, you shall pursue." These cases are the high points of my career.

As a party in a dispute settlement system, I do the best I can to advise my clients as to their rights and risks in any dispute. It is my responsibility as their advocate to do the best that I can to be successful on their behalf. It is the system as a whole that potentially has the ability to create a system of justice for the community. You do not have to look further than this country's history with slavery, discrimination against women, gay men and women and other minorities to understand that justice is hard won with great difficulty.

**Q:** What do you wish someone had told you in law school?

**A:** I felt that the Cornell Law School gave me good preparation to practice law. I had no illusion to my inability to actually function without great assistance from the partners in my firm and my colleagues.

**Q:** What are some of the benefits and challenges of practicing law in the Rochester region?

**A:** Rochester is a wonderful place to practice law. In comparison to other metropolitan cities, there is a collegiality that has most lawyers respecting each other and, thus, in practice we can focus on the real issues.

**Q:** Who are your professional heroes, living or dead? Why?

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**A:** In the eighth grade I read a biography of Clarence Darrow and understanding what the possibilities are in practicing law, both in making a living and possibly on occasion achieving something more than a dispute settlement was a great motivator for me in taking the path of being a lawyer.

I was fortunate to have Harry Goldman, a former PJ of the Fourth Department and father of my close friend and law school

roommate to use as a mentor and model of what a good lawyer should be, dedicated to the law and practicing the profession with high ethics and morals.

I also have had the honor of being in court many times with Dave Levy and I have attempted to emulate him by trying to simplify the issues and to find areas of agreement with the other side.

There are so many other lawyers whom I have been fortunate to be in court with and who by their professionalism taught

me so much and to understand that justice has to be in the heart.

**Q:** What do you hope to accomplish before retirement?

**A:** Since I have already received my 50 year plaque from the Monroe County Bar Association, my goal is to continue with my wonderful partners and associates in any capacity that I can be useful as long as I am mentally and physically fit to practice law.