John A. Fortin
Counselor at Law

McDONALD CARANO
YOUR NEVADA LAW FIRM SINCE 1949

Teamwork, leadership, toughness. The Navy taught him all that and so much more

Over the last 18 years, I have had the honor and privilege of serving as Cryptologist, Information Warfare Specialist, and intelligence analyst on both active and reserve duty in the US Navy. While on active duty, I served aboard the USS Simpson (FFG-56), the USS Iwo Jima (LHD-7), and at various cryptologic commands. I deployed twice to South America and supported counter-narcotics/trafficking operations and I deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom while serving with Cryptologic Support Team-20, the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force, and Naval Special Warfare Command ("SEAL") Teams Two and Four.

Working with, by, and through some of the highest caliber intelligence organizations in the world and the best, brightest, and highest performing individuals in the military provided me a front row seat to what it means – and takes – to be excellent both individually and as a leader. I credit many of my career successes to applying these experiences. I learned the value of teamwork, commitment, and courage. Any team in any organization is only as strong as the least experienced and least qualified member. True strength comes from a team, not an individual, and the cohesion of the team determines its success. Leaders must also be committed to constantly advancing and perfecting their craft so they can be effective and efficient mentors and teachers for the next generation. The best teams I ever worked with were teams in which it did not matter whether you were the skipper or the lowest ranking member. The leadership and the team demanded every member have courage to speak up, call out mistakes, and work toward learning from mistakes. Constructive criticism, always learning, never accepting mediocrity is an ethos and is the standard of excellence I learned to expect from myself and my teams.

Most importantly, understanding the time, place, and manner in which to speak the truth to those in positions of authority is an invaluable leadership quality that I learned. My mentors, leaders, and peers taught me to think critically, provide solutions to problems, and build a team by respecting everyone's conclusions (whether right or wrong) and never diminishing anyone's contributions.

I apply the lessons I learned as a sailor to my position as a litigator, appellate practitioner, and counselor. When things are going well, there are just a few times that people need lawyers. Nearly all of my clients have complex and challenging issues facing them. My experiences in the Navy prepared me to go to battle for my clients, to teach new things to colleagues, peers, and sometimes even my bosses, all while I learn the practice of law from the best lawyers in the State of Nevada.

Education (degrees & institutions): LL.M., Global Antitrust Law and Economics, George Mason University, Antonin Scalia Law School; JD, University of Richmond School of Law; BA, American Military University

Company Name: McDonald Carano LLP

Industry: Legal Services

Company CEO: George F. Ogilvie III, Managing Partner

Company Headquarters Location: Reno, NV

Number of Employees: 120

Your Location (if different from above): Las Vegas, NV

Words you live by: There are two ways to get things done: the right way, or again.

Who is your personal hero? Coach Mike Krzyzewski ("Coach K"). Growing up in Durham, North Carolina, being a life-long Duke fan, going to church and being a member of the same congregation as Coach K were really unique aspects of my childhood. Having former Duke assistant coach and Notre Dame head coach Mike Bray as a neighbor fueled my fandom for Duke basketball. Attending Duke Basketball games at Cameron Indoor Stadium is tremendous. Coach K is the consummate professional. He demanded greatness while always respecting his opponents (whether good or bad) by preparing his teams for every game as if it was a championship. Coach K also did it the right way, every time, for the whole time while he coached. As college basketball and (college sports in general) transformed during his tenure from the 1980s-2020s, he never became marred in controversy because he understood his role as mentor and teacher of young men.

What book(s) are you reading? *Unexampled Courage: The Blinding of Sgt. Isaac Woodard and the Awakening of President Harry S. Truman and Judge J. Waties Waring* by Richard Gergel

What was your first job? Lifeguard

Favorite charity: Cure 4 the Kids Foundation

Interests/Hobbies: Spending time with my wife, playing with my children, and reading really good historical and biographical books.

Family: I have been blessed with a beautiful, supportive, and wonderful wife, Jessa, our oldest son Liam, middle-son Aiden, and youngest daughter Mia which makes me one of the luckiest guys in the world.