

# CENTURY STRONG:

## The Enduring Legacy of an Iconic Cleveland Law Firm

SPIETH, BELL, McCURDY  
& NEWELL CO., L.P.A. *Est. 1867*

Schneider, Smeltz,  
Ranney & LaFond *Est. 1895*

The story of Schneider Smeltz Spieth Bell LLP dates back over 150 years when two iconic law firms arose to quickly become integral parts of Cleveland's legal community. In 1867, Robert E. Mix and Conway W. Noble established Mix & Noble, a prominent Cleveland law firm. Despite an era of societal, cultural, and economic changes, the firm continued in uninterrupted succession for the next 150 years, eventually becoming Spieth, Bell, McCurdy & Newell Co. LPA in 1975. In 1895, the second iconic firm was formed when John M. Henderson and Frank A. Quail founded Henderson & Quail. They also continued in uninterrupted succession, evolving into Schneider, Smeltz, Ranney & LaFond in 1990. In 2016, these legal powerhouses combined to form Schneider Smeltz Spieth Bell LLP.

With a hallmark of personalized service throughout its rich history, the legal mind trust of the attorneys at Schneider Smeltz Spieth Bell LLP has driven innovation, collaboration, negotiation, and education in the city amidst rapid growth, change, and advancements. As founder John M. Henderson said, "Each new generation has its own problems, and each meets them in its own way." From the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar to the countless clients it has served, the firm's legacy remains strong.

## Education

John G. White was a centerpiece of education and intellect in the city of Cleveland. White partnered with Mix and Noble in 1870 and was best known for his representation of **Cleveland Railway** and the **Catholic Diocese of Northern Ohio**. Perhaps White's greatest accomplishment, however, was his work with the **Cleveland Public Library**. He served as Board President and redesigned how the library was managed, bringing in a new classification system that gave library patrons a greater access to the volumes on the shelves. He also multiplied those volumes, transforming the meager 122 maps and 4 books that graced the shelves in 1885 to over 60,000 volumes at the time of his death in 1928. White knew that knowledge was power and was committed to building the power and intellect of the city.

## Innovation

John M. Henderson was more than just a brilliant lawyer when he founded the precursor to Schneider Smeltz Spieth Bell LLP in 1895. He was an innovator and trusted advisor to Cleveland's most successful businessmen. Over his 70-year career, he became well known for his astute legal expertise and effective problem-solving skills.

Henderson played a significant role in Cleveland's commercial, real estate, and civic advancements. Some of his early notable clients included the **Rockefeller family** and Alexander Winton, of **Winton Motor Cars**, one of the city's most successful automobile companies. He also incorporated **Cleveland Trust** and served as President of the Cleveland Bar Association from 1898-1899.

Perhaps Henderson's most significant, innovative contribution was his 99-year "Henderson Lease," a practical solution to a real estate development challenge in a rapidly growing Cleveland: how to build offices and stores without forcing property owners to sell. This innovation helped shape the city's skyline.

## Collaboration

Founder Frank A. Quail was hailed as both a successful lawyer and businessman. He worked tirelessly to bring people together to achieve common goals. Through his collaboration, he founded **Cleveland College**, served as a Cleveland Clinic trustee, led the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce, served as the Case Institute Board President for 25 years, and was President of the Cleveland Bar Association from 1946-1947.



The Halle Building now stands on the former site of Henderson's home at 12th and Euclid.

Cleveland Press editor Louis Seltzer once said, "Frank A. Quail has become a symbol for everything which is good and clean and honorable among men." His legacy is a testament to the power of community collaboration.

Quail's collaborative spirit was not limited to his service but extended throughout the city. He prepared the city's first land trust certificates, played an instrumental role in organizing the **Peerless Motor Car Company**, and incorporated the **Halle Brothers Company**. For the latter – Cleveland's longstanding, elite department store, he and the firm long served as the go-to legal representatives.

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# Negotiation

Hubert H. Schneider was a skilled negotiator and peacemaker. He worked alongside John Henderson from his early days at the firm and was known for his calm demeanor and ability to defuse tense situations among clients. He was a proven real estate expert, overseeing the firm's complicated practice during the Great Depression. Later, Schneider played a key role in easing tensions between two rival institutions: Case Institute and Western Reserve University. It was Schneider's negotiating skills and demeanor that helped broker a successful merger in 1967, forming what we now know as **Case Western Reserve University**.

As senior partners Henderson and Quail aged, Schneider stepped up to ensure the firm's continuity, and was named a partner in 1945. With his ability to navigate difficult situations with grace, Schneider was instrumental in the firm's success and longevity. Even after his passing in 1994, his legacy lived on as a model for the firm's attorneys and staff.

# Advice to the Next Generation

“Each new generation has its own problems, and each meets them in its own way.” -John M. Henderson, 1932

As the firm looks back on its rich history, it must also look ahead. To be sure that the firm's legacy is still lived out 150 years from now, while society and the law continue to rapidly evolve, it proposes the following advice for the next great minds that will become a part of this dynasty.

**Cultivate Collaboration.** Take great care to foster strong relationships throughout your career. These connections are fortified through direct, face-to-face contact, which can prove invaluable in achieving professional goals. By reflecting on the rich history of legal collaboration and negotiation, you can gain insight into the immense value of building genuine, lasting relationships in the field. Furthermore, by emphasizing the importance of personalized service, you can establish yourself as a trustworthy and respected member of the legal community.

**Cultivate Curiosity: Value Intellect.** Value the intellect of the profession and vow to becoming lifelong learners in the field of law. By staying abreast of advancements in the region and remaining curious about cultural and societal shifts you can become a valuable asset to your clients and community. Smart lawyers who understand the law and its broader implications are more likely to achieve successful outcomes for their clients, while also advancing the field of law as a whole. Therefore, invest in your intellectual growth and stay attuned to the latest developments in the legal landscape, as doing so will undoubtedly serve you well in your career.

Since we first opened our doors, we have always been a forward-thinking, innovative firm that has provided our clients with the best of modern solutions and classic service. From our humble beginnings, we have shaped the city of Cleveland and the legal profession with unwavering commitment and excellence, and we are dedicated to continuing this tradition. **We are excited about the future of the City of Cleveland, the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association, and how Schneider Smeltz Spieth Bell LLP will continue to meet each generation's challenges in a new way.** ■

# Legacy Leaders

The firm's extensive list of accomplished attorneys who have made their mark on the legal industry and the city is too vast to enumerate in this limited space. Nonetheless, their legacy remains a perpetual source of inspiration and guidance. As the spirits of these venerable attorneys grace the halls of our firm today, one can only imagine their thoughts on the practice they established in the city they helped build. Undoubtedly, they would take immense pride in the intellectual acumen that each partner, associate, and colleague brings to the table and expect nothing less than the demonstrated unwavering commitment to serving the community. The dramatic evolution of the law over the past century and a half would undoubtedly astound them.

The firm's business ramifications extended far, even in the representation of several entrepreneurs that had great impact for generations, including Hugo Young and Kent H. Smith, founder of the \$1.7 billion **Lubrizol Corporation**, and Harrison T. Chandler and **Chandler & Price Company**, the world's largest printing press manufacturer. Additionally, Herbert A. Spring, Lawrence C. Spieth, Sterling Newell, Jr., and Thomas J. LaFond served as past Cleveland Bar Presidents (in addition to Henderson and Quail). The firm's success is not a coincidence, but rather the result of intentional efforts to place innovative, collaborative, and skillful negotiators in the firm, maintain a high level of intellect, and provide timeless, personal client treatment.

**Cultivate Creativity: Choose the Best Strategy, Not Necessarily the Easiest Strategy.** To be successful, it's important to always prioritize the best strategy, even if it's not the easiest. Take the time to thoroughly evaluate all options, weighing the risks and benefits. This may require more effort and resources in the short term, but in the long run, it can save time, money, and even reputational damage. Don't shy away from a challenge or opt for the path of least resistance; instead, embrace the complexity and uncertainty of the legal landscape and use your intellect and skill to create the most advantageous outcome for your clients.

**Cultivate Connection: In a World of Technology, Do Not Lose Your Personal Touch.** As technology continues to transform the legal industry, it is essential for the next generation of attorneys to maintain their personal touch. While automation and digital tools can streamline processes and increase efficiency, the human element is still essential to building strong relationships and providing the highest level of client service. Do not let technology replace the value of face-to-face communication and personalized attention. Instead, embrace the benefits of technology while remaining committed to maintaining the personal connections that are critical to success in the legal profession.