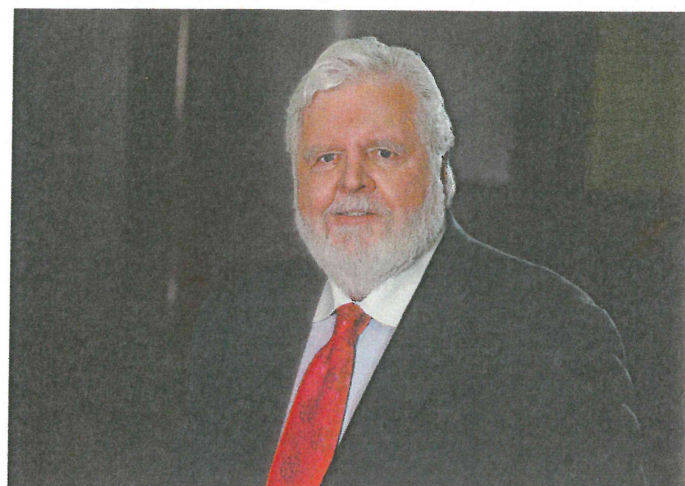


# Gallagher & Kennedy: A Lifetime of Friendship

CONVERSATION WITH MIKE GALLAGHER, ESQ.



## **How did you come to Arizona?**

I came to Arizona from Los Angeles to attend ASU on a baseball scholarship.

## **Tell us about your years at ASU.**

I was hurt most of the time during my years at ASU which was disappointing, but we had great teams and won the NCAA. After college, I signed a contract to play professional baseball.

## **What made you decide to go to law school?**

My bad arm ended my baseball career. Going to law school was my second choice. I was a scout for the New York Mets, and they paid for law school.

## **Where did you practice before starting Gallagher & Kennedy? How did you and Mike Kennedy become friends?**

Before Gallagher & Kennedy, Mike Kennedy and I worked at Snell & Wilmer. At that time, I was a young partner, and Mike was an up-and-coming superstar associate. We worked together a lot.

## **Tell us about how you two started the firm of Gallagher & Kennedy.**

I wanted to scratch the entrepreneurial itch and start a business. Mike and I went to a Suns game one night. At dinner, I asked if he wanted to join me and start a firm. He was all in.

## **What were some of the biggest challenges you and Mike faced in the early days?**

Like most businesses starting from scratch, financing was a significant challenge. We were lucky to get a bank loan. Getting business was another challenge. We always worked hard, and we were good producers. The third-largest challenge was hiring good people. One of the best decisions we made was hiring Kevin O'Malley. He was #1 in ASU's graduating class the year we started the firm in 1978.

## **Is there a funny story involving Mike you can share?**

We were meeting the GC of a major airline for dinner. Mike had never met him before – let's call the GC "John Smith." When we met at Scottsdale Hotel, Mike went up to the guy and introduced himself as John Smith. The GC replied, "Well, that's funny – that's my name, too!"

**Tell us about the role Gallagher & Kennedy played in the development of professional sports in Arizona.**

When I was at Snell & Wilmer, I had some sports clients and was an officer of the Phoenix Roadrunners Hockey Team. Mike had a golf background and a sister on the pro tour. At some point, Governor Bruce Babbitt appointed me Chair of a committee to bring the NFL to Phoenix and later Mayor Terry Goddard asked me to head up efforts to obtain a MLB franchise. Joe Garagiola, Jr., a sports lawyer, left our firm to become the first General Manager of the Diamondbacks. Mike and I were both Phoenix Thunderbirds and he was chairman of a Phoenix Open golf tournament. He also served as president of the Diamondback's Charitable Foundation from its inception and headed up two Super Bowl committees. Our sports work went well and gained the firm a nice reputation.

**How do you feel the practice of law has changed in the last 40 years?**

Back in the day, the Bar was small. Lawyers treated each other pretty well because we knew we would come across each other's paths sooner or later. Your reputation meant everything. These days, you often have cases against attorneys you won't see again. This type of distancing causes a lack of professionalism in my opinion.

**When you reflect on the years, you and Mike spent together, what memory stands out the most?**

When I think about Mike, I think of the early days. There were no two lawyers who were closer. We spent a lot of time together and could finish each other's sentences.

**What advice or wisdom can you share with young lawyers starting today?**

- You picked an excellent profession that can provide a nice lifestyle. But if you are looking to get rich, get out of law and into business.
- A reputation can take years to build and minutes to destroy. Cherish it.
- You can't help it if you are not the smartest person in the room, but there is no excuse for not being the hardest worker.



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