



Trial Lawyer of the Year, UF Law grad, offers students advice

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By Francie Weinberg
Student writer

Timon Sullivan (JD 79) says the five fundamentals of being a successful trial attorney include telling the truth, being the most respectful person in the courtroom, being prepared and organized, mastering the rules and being yourself but learning from others.

Anyone interested in a career in trial advocacy might want to listen. That's because Sullivan, who spoke in the Martin H. Levin Advocacy Center courtroom on Wednesday, was named the 2012 trial advocate of the year by the Florida chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates. The UF Law graduate designated his award gift to the law

Timon Sullivan (JD 79) gives advice to UF Law students Nov. 14 in the Martin H. Levin Advocacy Center courtroom. (Photo by Elise Giordano)

school's trial program.

"These are the most basic things you can learn," Sullivan said. "From the very first day you step foot out of here, and really while you're here, you are building a reputation that you are going to carry with you for the rest of your life."

He also encouraged students to find their own personal style in order to allow everyone in the courtroom to perceive them as genuine.

"You are whoever you are right now," he said. "You're not going to be someone different five years from now. However you relate to people, you're probably going to relate that way for the rest of your life. You've got to be whoever you are and make that your style."

Finally, Sullivan explained the benefits of technology in the courtroom, demonstrating how to use TrialPad and TranscriptPad, which are both apps for the iPad.

"I have been kicking the butts of these 30-something-year-old lawyers because they just don't use technology," Sullivan said. "Here I am, a 58-year-old lawyer, using an iPad. You guys have been using the computer since you were born."

In 1990, Sullivan co-founded Ogden and Sullivan P.A., a civil trial practice firm in Tampa. He practices transportation litigation, life, health and disability insurance litigation, ERISA, personal injury and wrongful death, products liability, professional negligence and commercial litigation.

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