



CHRIS PIETSCH/The Register-Guard

Ralph Cobb, 88, has been practicing law for more than 60 years. The Eugene law firm he co-founded is in its 55th year.

LEGAL LONGEVITY

Eugene attorney Ralph Cobb has no plans to retire after 60-plus years of "taking care of the little guy"

BY EMILY GILLESPIE
The Register-Guard

On the third floor of the Lane County courthouse, the walls are lined with the portraits of circuit court judges that have been on the bench. Ralph Cobb has worked with all but a few.

"I tell everybody I think I was around when the Dead Sea was sick," Cobb said with a laugh.

In his 61st year of practicing law in Eugene, 88-year-old Cobb enjoys his work too much to make retirement plans.

"I wouldn't be here if I didn't like what I do," he said. "It makes you feel good if you're able to help people, and that is probably the thing that has propelled me to stay as long as I have."

RALPH COBB

Age: 88

Profession: Attorney

Education: B.A. from Yankton College and law degree from University of South Dakota, both in 1948

Book currently reading: "My Life in France," by Julia Child

Hobbies: Golf, reading, following sports, especially Duck sports

Cobb, whose civil practice includes insurance and legal malpractice defense cases and personal injury claims, is a founder and partner of Luvaas Cobb Attorneys at Law in Eugene.

Cobb: Credits community connections

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July marked the company's 55th anniversary, which has grown from two lawyers in 1955 — Cobb and John Luvaas — to 12. Luvaas retired in 1994 and passed away in 2007.

Cobb said that the best part of his job is to advocate for those who are at the low points in their lives.

"Probably the salient thing that has happened in all of these years," he said, "has been the people I have met and been able to help through precarious times."

The experiences range from winning heart-warming cases to being asked for advice on purchasing a car, Cobb said.

"I have seen all walks of life come into my office," he said. "In this work, one could write a book about the things that have occurred."

In 1998 — when he was in his 70s — the Oregon chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates named him the Trial Lawyer of the Year.

After decades in the profession, Cobb views it as a pillar of society.

"I feel real strongly that the reason our country is successful is because of the rule of law," Cobb said.

"We are careful about taking care of the little guy. If that little guy gets run over by some large corporation, we're there to help him," he said.

Although Cobb is the last original founder and partner of the firm, attorney Joe Richards has also been there since the beginning, starting in 1955 and becoming a partner two years later.

"We're best friends," Richards said. "It's been wonderful," he said of the 55 years he has spent at the firm and with Cobb.

Of the firm's 12 lawyers, nine are partners.

"We've just been lucky to have had such a close relationship," Cobb said of the lawyers in the firm. "I really mean what I'm saying, Bob and Joe are really skilled in their work, top professionals, very fortunate to have people around like that."

Robert "Bob" Fraser has been a part of the Lane County, state, and federal Bar and is also president of the Oregon Bach Festival Board. James Dominic "Dom" Monahan focuses his work on broadcast cases, such as those involving the Federal Communications Commission, and is also president of the Round Table Club of Eugene.

"We have a strong belief in public service," said Richards, who is a previous board president of the United Way of Lane County.

Cobb has been a member of Eugene Downtown Lions Club and the Governing Board of Sacred Heart General Hospital and PeaceHealth, among other things, while Richards is chairman of the Oregon Environmental Quality Commission.

Cobb attributes the firm's success to its community connections.

"A number of (lawyers) here are active in the community, and maybe that's why the firm has a good degree of success is that we're out in the community, really not to make money but simply giving back," Cobb said.



A figure in Cobb's office holds a "Will sue for food" sign.