

Boynton, Waldron, Doleac, Woodman & Scott, P.A.

A Lofty Legal Legacy

PORTSMOUTH LAW FIRM'S LOCAL EXPERIENCE STRETCHES BACK GENERATIONS

By Will Courtney

*W*hen Jeremy R. Waldron first opened his law practice in Portsmouth in 1920, he wanted the firm to combine small-city values and big-city strengths, while staying grounded to its community through a commitment to public service.

The effort proved to be quite successful. By 1925, Waldron was named New Hampshire attorney general, a post he held until 1929. Two years later, he was retained by the Granite State to argue before a master of the U.S. Supreme Court,



helping the state win a contentious border dispute with Vermont.

Waldron might never have imagined the success would last through 2013 and beyond. Now the longest-tenured firm in the city and under the name Boynton, Waldron, Doleac, Woodman & Scott, P.A., the firm still holds close those principles of civic leadership and client service. Now, says partner Charles B. Doleac, the firm has an added advantage – generations of local experience and community connections that high-priced, big-city firms can't buy.



From Left to Right

**Front Row: William G. Scott, Christine Woodman Casa, Susan Aileen Lowry, Charles A. Griffin
Back Row: Charles B. Doleac, Christopher E. Grant, Ralph R. Woodman, Jr., Philip L. Pettis
Opposite Page: Francis X. Quinn, Jr., Heather Dunion Neville**



“We have the practical wisdom you only get from experience,” Doleac says. “Our clients come from long term relationships within the community. We get a lot of cases from other lawyers and judges. We are known.”

Despite the firm’s storied past, its legacy to the present is only a few generations deep. Waldron is in the present-day name of the firm, but that belongs to Jeremy’s son, Jerry, a

decorated war veteran who joined the firm in the 1940s until he retired in 1997. For decades, the younger Waldron worked alongside Wyman Boynton, an active civic leader in Portsmouth who also served as county attorney. In the 1960s and ‘70s, current partners Doleac, Ralph Woodman, Jr., and William Scott joined the firm. Each has now practiced law for more than 40 years, and they all have community volunteer resumes too long to list.

The firm today is comprised of 10 full-time attorneys, a team of paralegals, state of the art legal research technology and an administrative staff that personally answers each call. Surrounded by so much local history, with the firm housed in an 1810 Federalist-style mansion at 82 Court Street, the younger attorneys can’t ignore the firm’s heritage. In the office’s conference room, oil paintings of the Waldrons watch over the matters at hand.

The new blood quickly learn that they are not just serving long-time clients, but also the children and grandchildren of former clients. “They have the confidence in us to come back after their lives change and develop,” says attorney Philip Pettis, who has spent 11 years with the firm. “The firm is capable of handling a wide variety of complex cases for clients and businesses.”

New clients often retain the firm for its unmatched experience and connections in the courts of New Hampshire’s Seacoast and Southern Maine. In today’s global economy, even large companies are seeing the advantages of a small-city firm with strong local relations.



Attorney Christine Woodman Casa, whose father has been with the firm almost since she was born, believes it is the confidence of so many of their colleagues in the legal community that gives the firm its steadfast reputation. “I think our referrals make us who we are,” she says. “We routinely get referrals from other lawyers and judges. It’s not just because some lawyer knows one of us. It’s because they see us in action, they see what we’re doing and how hard we work, and they see the results we get. We’ve done that for generations.”

Pettis has found that the firm’s reputation often reaches well beyond the legal halls of New England. “In a recent case, I got a phone call from a lawyer in Los Angeles that made it very clear he’s heard of us,” Pettis says. “He called a couple of lawyers in New Hampshire and Connecticut, and said, ‘I know what you guys do and what you are capable of. You have a great reputation.’”

Doleac says the firm’s longstanding, local reputation for civil litigation drives new business to the firm. We have the trial experience, knowledge of the law and courts, the skills to be able to compete against national companies, and we can do it at small-city rates.”

The growth of the Portsmouth/Kittery area as a commercial hub has expanded the firm’s business client base, including those in need of legal assistance in zoning and real estate issues, where Doleac notes “connections are critical.”

Today, the team Boynton, Waldron, Doleac, Woodman & Scott, P.A., handle virtually any type of legal needs of their clients -- from wills and estate plans to civil litigation, business law to family law. They do it with the same values that Jeremy Waldron started almost a century ago.

Many of the attorneys are homegrown from the Seacoast area, and just like their predecessors, they all volunteer across the community. Boynton and Jerry Waldron, and Waldron’s father, wouldn’t have had it any other way, says Doleac, as he looks up at the portraits over the conference table: “The basic values of how you advocate for clients and serve the community have been consistent throughout.”

ATTORNEYS: CHARLES B. DOLEAC, RALPH WOODMAN, JR.,
WILLIAM G. SCOTT, CHRISTOPHER E. GRANT,
FRANCIS X. QUINN, JR., PHILLIP L. PETTIS,
CHRISTINE WOODMAN CASA, HEATHER DUNION NEVILLE,
CHARLES A. GRIFFIN, SUSAN AILEEN L. LOWRY.

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ATNE Magazine • Portsmouth, NH 2013 • page 28



What’s in a name?

The names etched on the sign in front of 82 Court Street are comprised of two former and three active partners in the 93-year-old firm.

Jeremy R. Waldron, Sr.

The firm’s founder in 1920, he rose to prominence in state legal circles, serving as New Hampshire attorney general. He is not, however, the Waldron on the sign.

Wyman Boynton

After joining the firm in the 1930s, Boynton would become Rockingham County solicitor and a dedicated civic leader in Portsmouth. He died in 1996.

Jeremy “Jerry” Waldron, Jr.

Upon graduating Harvard Law School, Jerry Waldron joined his father’s firm. A recipient of the Purple Heart and Bronze Star in World War II, he played a key role at home in the historic preservation of Portsmouth, including the creation of Strawberry Banke. He died in 2012.

Charles B. Doleac (photo above)

A member of the firm for 40 years, he has twice been named Portsmouth Citizen of the Year in 1991 and in 2005, for his public service. His work on the Portsmouth Peace Treaty with Japan earned him Japan’s Imperial Decoration, Gold Rays with Rosette, one of the country’s highest honors.

Ralph R. Woodman, Jr.

While working with the firm for the last four decades, Woodman has served on several local boards, both public and private. He has worked with the Chase Home for Children in Portsmouth for more than 30 years and is currently the Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

William G. Scott

Over his 43-year legal career, Scott has worked in the local, state and federal court systems. In Portsmouth, he has previously served as a member of the city council, president of the United Way and Chairman of the Board for the Childrens Museum of Portsmouth.

Attorneys Philip Pettis and Christine Woodman Casa

You Can Go Home Again

Young Attorneys Continue Firm's Legacy of Service and Success

Practicing law in your hometown brings with it an added level of responsibility not to just successfully fight for people in your community, but to treat them right along the way. Doing it at the oldest law firm in the city, with connections and a reputation that stretch back nearly a century, raises the bar even higher.

To attorneys Philip Pettis and Christine Woodman Casa, working in the city where they were raised is hardly intimidating. To the contrary, they see it as an opportunity they always hoped they'd get – a chance to give back to the community that has served them so well. Though they have a combined 31 years experience practicing law, they are part of the new generation of litigators at Boynton,



Waldron, Doleac, Woodman & Scott, P.A., a firm that has built its storied reputation by taking care of generations of people in Seacoast New Hampshire and Southern Maine since 1920.

As Charles Doleac, a partner says, “The concept of being a professional, as Jerry Waldron (one of the firm’s pioneers) would have probably put it, is not about doing something for someone for money, it is about truly helping people. It’s about trying to do the right thing by the client the right way.”

It would not be a stretch to say that Pettis and Casa were virtually born and bred to do just that for the city of Portsmouth. Casa was raised by a lawyer; her father, Ralph Woodman, Jr., has his name on the firm’s sign. Pettis received several scholarships from the Portsmouth community to help him pay for college, including one administered by the law firm for which he now works. Both admit that practicing law in their hometown was always part of the plan.

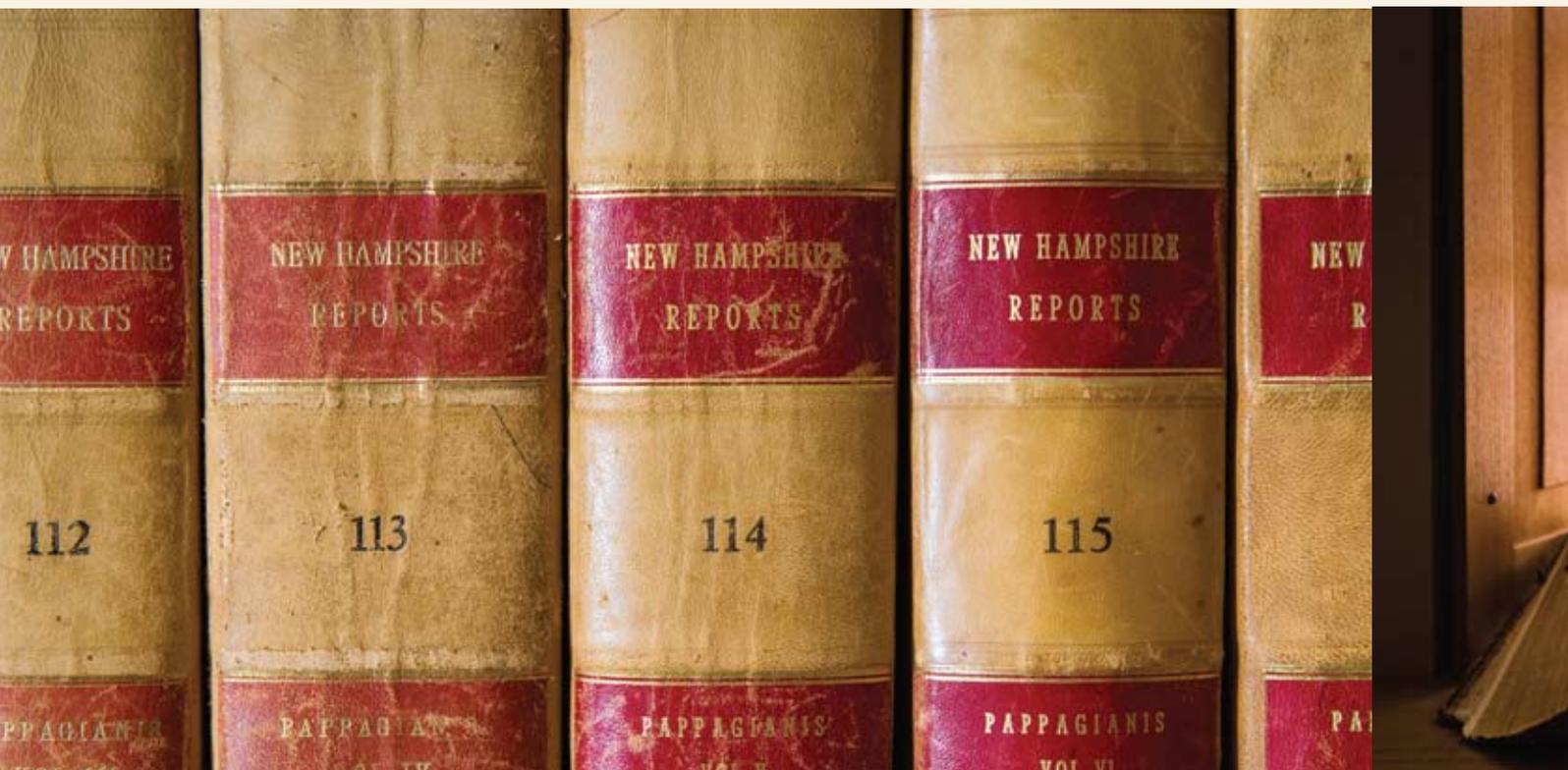
“Honestly, ever since I can remember, being a lawyer is what I have wanted to do,” Casa says. “It’s just something that always seemed to be a part of who I am.” Since she graduated from Suffolk Law School in 1997, Casa has been employed at Boynton, Waldron, Doleac, Woodman & Scott. Over that time, she has practiced in many different areas, but has developed a significant focus on family law litigation and mediation, helping people through some of the most difficult periods of their lives. Legal disputes

between family members force her to strike a difficult balance between offering empathetic support to her clients and proactively and aggressively advocating for them.

With her client’s trust, Casa says she can then help them understand the law and their legal options while letting the client make the final decisions to achieve the best outcome for their individual situation. “It is vital that the client is well informed and takes part in the process, especially an active role in decision-making since these decisions will have a significant impact on their future. The client has to trust me on a personal and professional level. Not only is this one of, if not the most personal time in their lives, but it can be a highly intrusive process. Clients need to be completely comfortable with me and confident in my ability to advocate for them and protect their interests. This is key to maintaining a successful attorney client relationship.”

Pettis says his mother identified his litigious talents at a young age with his penchant for debate. Once he chose to go to law school at Franklin Pierce Law Center, the Portsmouth High School graduate knew he’d end up back home. “This community was very good to me when I was younger,” Pettis says. “I always knew I wanted to come back here to practice.”

Pettis joined the firm in 2002, and in the past decade has developed expertise in a number of areas, including civil, business and personal injury law. That said, he’s developed a particular passion for employment law,





The most important thing is you are comfortable with your attorney.” – **Christine Casa**

empowering individuals or small businesses that often face adversaries with much larger resources. “I really enjoy advocating for people who need a strong, experienced litigator.” Pettis has successfully handled large cases against lawyers across the country, including Chicago, Miami, Boston and Los Angeles.

He also enjoys giving back to the community from which he came. As Pettis recalls, when applying to schools, one scholarship panel impressed upon him, “don’t forget where you came from.” Pettis has served as President of the Market Square Steeple Fund since 2005, and received the Volunteer of the Year Award

from the Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce in 2007 for his work with that committee. He also currently serves as co-chair of the Clipper Foundation, which raises money to fund grants for innovative teaching methods in Seacoast schools.

Casa has served on several community boards in the area. She currently donates her time by serving on the Board of Directors of the Portsmouth Music & Arts Center, a non-profit community music and arts school serving children and adults in the community, with a mission to build community through the arts by providing opportunities to all people regardless of age, ability or economic status.

With another nod to his forebear at Boynton, Waldron, Doleac, Woodman & Scott, P.A., Doleac again quotes Waldron when he says, “Being a part of and giving back to the community is what we are all about.”

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