

Koskoff, Koskoff and Bieder has become one of Connecticut's most successful law firms

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The Connecticut Post

Published on Internet: 12:06 a.m., Saturday, January 29, 2011

Published in Print Jan. 30, 2011



Michael Koskoff, left, is the senior partner of Koskoff, Koskoff and Bieder, the firm founded 75 years ago by his father, Ted Koskoff. He is standing with Richard Bieder, a managing partner who joined the firm in 1969. Founder Ted Koskoff figured out a unique way to build a practice, get other lawyers to give him clients. Today, the statewide firm he founded, Koskoff, Koskoff and Bieder, still gets about 65 to 70 percent of its business from other lawyers. Photo: Contributed Photo / Connecticut Post Contributed |

Seventy-five years ago, a young lawyer named Ted Koskoff, figured out a unique way to build a practice: Get other lawyers to give him clients.

Today, the statewide firm he founded, Koskoff, Koskoff and Bieder, still gets about 65 to 70 percent of its business from other lawyers.

"He just went to the lawyers in Bridgeport and said if you have a case you feel you can't win, give them to me," [Michael Koskoff](#), senior partner and Ted Koskoff's son, said. "People would bring a file to him that day, sometimes standing in the courthouse."

Ted Koskoff became a legend in Connecticut courtrooms and his firm handled big cases, including defending the [Black Panthers](#) and representing plaintiffs in some of the state's key civil rights cases. The firm grew and now has offices in Stamford, Danbury, Bridgeport and New Haven, but it still practices law for the underdog, the principals said. Almost 100 percent of its cases are taken on a contingent fee basis, meaning the firm doesn't collect unless it wins a judgement for its client.

This has created a business issue at times for the firm, Michael Koskoff said.

"We're more dependent on collecting from insurance agencies, government entities ..." Koskoff said. "And no, they're not quick to pay."

One reason the firm has been successful is its selectivity, the partners say.

"We're not the kind of the law firm that can take up any side of the argument," Koskoff said. The firm was offered a large fee to defend a company from a discrimination suit brought by a black employee. Koskoff said the firm just couldn't do it, so it turned down the client.

Richard Bieder, who joined the firm in 1969, said he chose to work here because Ted Koskoff valued the input of all the lawyers on whether the firm should or shouldn't take a case.

The managing partners have continued to honor that tradition, said [Jim Horwitz](#), who came onboard in 1986.

The men said the firm is dedicated to causes and they see a lot of potential work in the coming years in health care and finance.

"The area that seems to be growing is corporate greed," Bieder said. The firm expects to see more cases involving financial practices that have harmed the everyday worker and investor.

Koskoff, Koskoff and Bieder is already well knows in malpractice lawsuits and the firm says it has the ability to work in other fields.

That's been one of its competitive advantages. The firm dedicates resources to learning about other fields and finding experts to educate attorneys who will be working cases. The firm has built one of the most extensive medical libraries in the state and country.