



## After 35 years, Berrane Law still raising the bar

When you've worked in the legal field as long as Bradley Berrane, you've heard your share of lawyer jokes. The one he remembers most is about a wealthy man who wants to take his money with him when he dies. The man entrusts \$1 million each to his doctor, his preacher and his lawyer, and instructs them to throw the bills into his coffin. After his death, the first two admit they put the money into a hospital and an orphanage, but the lawyer says, "I put it into my bank account and wrote him a check!"

"I guess the moral is supposed to be, 'Don't give money to a lawyer'," chuckles Berrane. In reality, though, Brad Berrane is exactly the person you would want handling your will. Valued in the community for his skill and compassion with estate planning, Berrane is marking 35 years of business in York County. His firm also specializes in business law, with additional services for personal injury, DUI and traffic defense.

Berrane was 12 when he realized he wanted to be a lawyer.

"I was sitting with my father having lunch, and he asked, 'What do you want to be when you grow up?' I said, 'A lawyer.' He was surprised," Berrane said. "My father had a roofing company, and then a small retail store. I heard him talk about lawyers and how they helped him. I also saw them on TV and in the movies—usually portrayed as good guys. I was interested in the challenges and arguments they made."

Those challenges have been often the most rewarding part of his career. Berrane said he really enjoys finding ways to work around difficult situations, to get people the help they need. His firm's focus has evolved over the years.



"As a young person, you find criminal cases more inspiring," he said. But as the years passed, he shifted to real estate and then, after the recession, became dedicated to estate and business planning. In all of these areas though, the goal has remained the same: helping people.

Born and raised in York County, and the son of a York County business owner, Berrane had no trouble deciding where to set up shop. After graduating magna cum laude from Christopher Newport College (now University) with a degree in political science, he entered Rutgers University School of Law in New Jersey. That's where Berrane met wife Susan, who was working as a legal secretary. January 1983 became a turning point in his life. On the 4th, Berrane opened his law practice on Highway 17, alongside then-partner Don Reichle. Eleven days later, he and Susan wed. Today, the Berranes have a grown son and daughter, who still live in the area, and three grandchildren, ages 7, 2 and 20 months.

At the same time he was helping raise a family, Berrane also was helping raise the County's business community. He was a founding member of the York County Business Association—now the Chamber of Commerce.

"Originally it was a group of businessmen meeting at a restaurant," he said, "with the growing concern that the business community needed help dealing with the County. There were also other needs like education, networking,

exchange of ideas, and sharing products and services.” Over time, he would serve as its attorney, president and other offices, before ultimately stepping away.

“I decided not to interfere with the growth of it. It’s like a tree—you plant it, water it, and then and sit back and watch it grow and mature. It’s done very well! It had, and continues to have, good leaders working hard to encourage and feed it. The Chamber is a really important part of the County and its growth,” he said.

When asked what changes he has seen in the County’s business community over the years, Berrane commended the County government for greater openness in dealing with business members. He said the staff really recognizes how the business tax revenue supports County needs, and that it’s now easier for businesspeople to go directly to County staff and ask for help.

“It’s on both sides—there is more recognition among staff members that part of their job is to support businesses, to help them find out what county requirements are. And for businesspeople, there used to be a sense of thinking that the government tries to stop them from doing things. Now their eyes are open. We’re fortunate to have great people working for York County going out of their way to show that they are trying to help!”



Berrane still gives occasional advice to the Chamber and also has served on the County’s Economic Development Authority. Looking back on 35 years of business in the County, what does he find most fulfilling?

“When I run into someone I’ve known for years or who has been a client for several years—or their children—and they tell me how much they appreciate what I did for them,” he said. Whether you need guidance through the estate planning process, are trying to navigate the complicated businesses entity formation process, or seek other types of experienced legal advice, be sure to contact Berrane Law at 757-898-7234 or [www.berraneblaw.com/](http://www.berraneblaw.com/)

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