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New chief for employment group

Hyderally: The key is education

By Dana E. Sullivan

For lawyers considering taking on an occasional employment law client, Ty Hyderally has two words of advice: "Case selection."

Actually he offers more than two words, but that issue is right up there on his educational agenda for his two years as president of the National Employment Lawyers Association of New Jersey.

Without the kind of education he believes NELA can offer, Hyderally sees plenty of hazards in what he calls "a minefield" for the inexperienced.

"I really strongly suggest they join our organization, even if they only do one or two cases a year," he told *New Jersey Lawyer*.

While officers of all bar groups in the state make appeals for membership, Hyderally, who heads a small but growing five-lawyer firm in Montclair, keeps the pitch very specific.

For instance, in addition to attending seminars, members can tap the other 150 or so members for advice through the group's listserv.

NELA also gets involved in *amicus* cases, and Hyderally is particularly proud of the organization's and his own work on a brief for *Cutler v. Dorn*.

In that case, the state Supreme Court ruled in favor of a Jewish police officer who felt a co-worker's comment about "dirty Jews" was the last straw.

Hyderally, who has spent his entire post-Navy JAG career in employment law, sees it as a growing — and practically guaranteed — area of practice.

Considering the lack of respect still shown women, minorities and the aged, "You can't legislate away the kind of work I do, because you can't legislate away bias," he said.

Another aspect of human nature — ego — comes into play, he said, when corporate officers and even line bosses come down on someone who's complaining about wages, conditions or discrimination.

Whistleblowers are even more likely to find they're in for tough counterattacks, even though they're technically protected by legislation and the courts.

Contrary to what some may think, he said, those who seek his help don't do it to see how much money they can make.

"They don't want to sue their bosses. They don't want to be seen as troublemakers. They don't want to become pariahs."

Hyderally was born in Sri Lanka and spent his childhood in London before his family moved to New Jersey.

An alumnus of Johns Hopkins University, he graduated in 1993 from the Boalt School of Law at the University of California at Berkeley.

After a season as a ski instructor in Vermont, he joined the Navy as a JAG officer, doing criminal trial work until his hitch was over in 1997. While knocking around in Pensacola, Fla., someone suggested an employment law firm.

"A week later I was trying a major age discrimination case," he said. "Employment law found me."

When he returned to New Jersey, he worked as a defense attorney, first with



Ty Hyderally

Friedman Siegelbaum in Roseland, then with Jackson Lewis in Morristown.

But he decided he really wanted to be a plaintiffs attorney, and in 2001 moved to Davis Saperstein & Salomon in Teaneck, where he helped build its employment law practice.

Two years later, he started the firm that bears his name.

Hyderally admits to a heady feeling about his success and the growth of his small firm, which has gone from one lawyer to five, and now has 10 staffers.

"Sometimes I look out across the room and wonder how all these people got here," he said.

NELA's other officers for 2008-10 are Michael G. Kane, vice president; Claudia A. Reis, secretary; and Lisa M. Curry, treasurer.

Comments about this story may be sent to dana.sullivan@njlnews.com.