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THE BUSINESS OF NEW JERSEY

THREE QUESTIONS

Attorney devoted to law and order

Attorney Bruce Nagel just doesn't win cases. He also has won the respect of his peers.

Nagel has been recognized in New Jersey Monthly Magazine and New Jersey Super Lawyers magazine.

A 30-year law veteran, he is a senior partner with the firm Nagel Rice in Roseland.

Nagel talked with The Star-Ledger about being a good lawyer, and his favorite TV attorney.

Q. What makes a good lawyer?

A. A good lawyer is a mix of many ingredients, including smarts, creativity, compassion and a sense of what is right and wrong.

A good lawyer must be interested in a case and delve into the detailed facts of it.

A good lawyer should be results-oriented, creating a strategy and a road-map to victory at the earliest stage of the litigation.

The lawyer should have the respect of his opponents, and the respect of the bench and bar as a whole.

Q. Have you ever turned down a client because you just didn't believe the story?

A. Since credibility is always a key factor in any case, it is essential that

the client's story is believable. So, in some instances, I have turned down clients over the years on the sole basis that I did not believe them. Call it "instinct."

That is not to say that I will decline someone's case just because, while true, it may not be believable to others.



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My job is to take such a case and present the client's story in a coherent, believable manner.

In the long run, there may be gray areas or two sides to every story ... but only one "truth." And it is my job to convey that truth to the judge or jury.

Q. Who is your favorite TV attorney and why?

A. Sam Waterston, the actor that plays District Attorney Jack McCoy in "Law & Order," because he is a creative, winning attorney with a good and decent soul.

The success of the show speaks volumes about viewer interest in the legal system and McCoy's pursuit of justice.

In addition to his creative legal mind, his courtroom presence is second to none, especially when he presents his closing argument to the jury.

— Cynthia Parker

Please submit suggestions for "Three Questions" to cparker@starledger.com.