

# Paul Mark Sandler

Of Counsel  
Shapiro Sher Guinot  
& Sandler, P.A.

## → What made you decide to become a lawyer?

When I was in high school, I read Stephen Vincent Benét's *The Devil* and *Daniel Webster*, which inspired me to become a trial lawyer. As I matured, my reasons for wanting to be a lawyer changed as well: I wanted to help people, in court, as a trial and appellate lawyer. I also felt that it was important as a lawyer to become involved in community activities.

## → What community activities are you involved in?

I have made it a policy over the years to try to help different entities by serving on their boards. For example, I am currently on the board of Stevenson University, and in the past, I have served on boards for St. Joseph Medical Center, Legal Aid Bureau, and Maryland Public Television. I have always enjoyed community service and feel it is important to give back.

## → What is the best piece of advice you received from someone in the legal profession?

When I had my first position as an associate, I was told: Welcome to the legal profession, with an emphasis on profession; if you want to make tons of money, go across the street and work in real estate. It is important that attorneys keep in mind the law is still a profession and act professionally.

## → What professional accomplishment would you say you are most proud of?

Generally speaking, the greatest reward I received as a trial lawyer was when a verdict or judgment was rendered in my client's favor, and I personally and professionally believed in the correctness of the side I was representing. That's particularly true in criminal cases. I was always delighted to prevail when I personally believed my client was not guilty. Similarly, in civil cases, when the verdict was favorable, and I believed my client was right.

Some of these cases are intense and life-altering to the clients, and if I believed a client was innocent or correct, obtaining a favorable outcome was really gratifying.

## → What do you enjoy most about your practice?

Being in Court was the most rewarding experience I have had as a lawyer. Now in my senior years I enjoy teaching trial and appellate practice in programs I develop, writing books and articles for young lawyers, hoping to inspire them to embrace a career as a trial or appellate lawyer, and continuing to communicate with them during their careers. I also enjoy working with the lawyers and staff in Shapiro Sher Guinot & Sandler, who support my teaching and writing endeavors.

## → What two words would you use to describe your career?

Amazing and gratifying. It is amazing and gratifying because of the people I've met, the professional and personal relationships I've established, the ability to be in trial or in an appellate argument, and the help I have given to the development of the rule of law. I hope that I have, at least in some small way, contributed to improving the professional life of lawyers and the judiciary.

## → What does a typical day at work look like for you?

These days I spend at least 60% of my time teaching in person or virtually bootcamp trial and appellate training programs that I develop. I continue to write and update books I've authored and co-authored, e.g., *Pleading Causes of Action*, *Appellate Practice for the Maryland Lawyer*, *Pattern Examination of Witnesses*, published by the MSBA. I am also involved in consulting on cases in the firm and interacting with the lawyers in the office, including the young lawyers. I still work about 10 hours a day, including weekends, and am enjoying it. I was always told that if you love what you do, you'll never work a day in your life, and that's how I feel about my legal work.

## → What do you like to do when you are not working?

I have many interests and hobbies. I love reading, am an

amateur astronomer, and play the blues harmonica. I also enjoy riding my horse on my farm and cross-country skiing in the winter.

## → What are some of the challenges you face in your current role?

We are always challenged when as lawyers, we feel that a client has been prejudiced and there's a need to correct the wrong, and often others don't see it your way. I feel that's always a challenge. I also think it's important to appreciate that while law practice today is a business, it is also a profession.

## → Can you think of a way the MSBA has helped you in your career?

I grew up in the MSBA. I met colleagues and learned to work with them, socialized, served on the Board of Governors, created the Litigation Section, and served as its first chair. I feel that the leaders of the MSBA are very admirable because of the work they do to improve the legal system and establish a good rapport with the judiciary. It is from the MSBA that I developed my love of professionalism and an appreciation of ethical guidelines and the role that lawyers serve amongst themselves, in Court, and in the community.

