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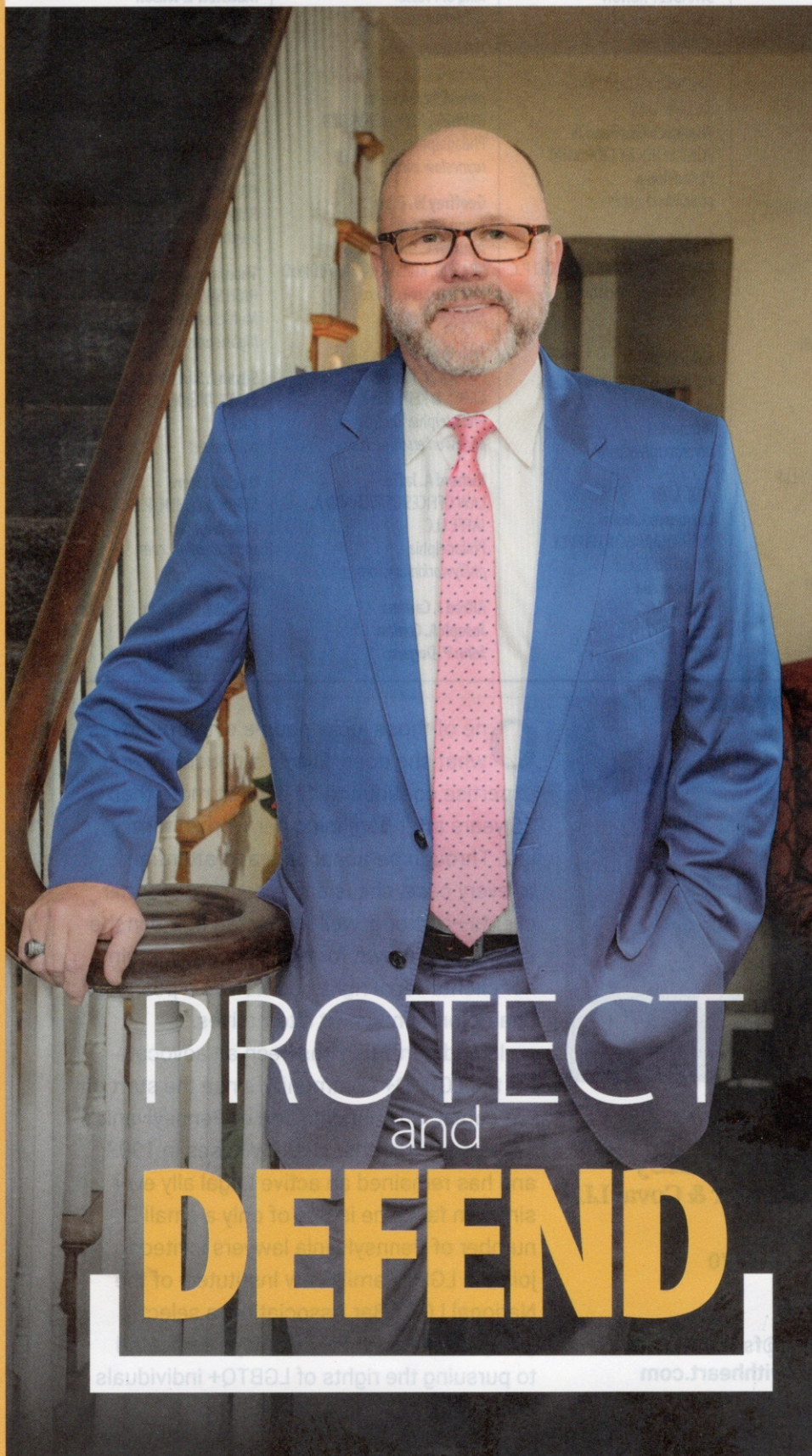
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# PROTECT and DEFEND

Individuals implicated in criminal matters gain a calming presence and a tireless advocate when they hire defense attorney **Kevin T. Coyne.**

**W**ITH MORE THAN 30 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE TO HIS CREDIT, ATTORNEY KEVIN T. COYNE RECOGNIZES THE URGENCY OFTEN EXPRESSED BY HIS CLIENTS. As their criminal defense counsel, he understands their desire to rush through the legal system, and for him to secure a positive outcome as quickly as possible. When the U.S. justice system is bearing down on a defendant in a criminal case, however, moving faster may not necessarily be better.

"I explain to my clients that this is a marathon, not a 100-yard sprint," says Coyne, whose law office is based in Woodlyn, Delaware County. "They're so focused on the immediate, the here and now, I tell them, 'Let me do my job and get you ready for some of the most important decisions of your life. We need time to build a case.' Most of the time, the client has never been in trouble before, and now they may be looking at years and years in jail. There's a lot of emotion involved. All they're thinking about is for me to make sure they don't go to jail. I stress to them they just need to be patient."

Coyne's client-first credo: Take the time to gather information and assess potential strategies, and always maintain level-headedness. Above all, keep the client informed. He credits his measured and thoughtful approach for the fact that he has become one of the most sought-after and respected criminal defense attorneys in the Delaware Valley.

"When some clients are sitting there and I tell them their sentence could be five months in jail, but that they're being offered a deal, they say, 'Where do I sign up?'" he adds. "They're in a hurry to get it done. Other clients say they're not taking any deal, that they want their day in court, and that's OK as long as they understand the implications."





***"When clients get results, they're incredibly grateful. ... But you can't dwell on that because there's the next person who needs you to help them."***

**— Kevin T. Coyne**



"In either case, my goal is to make sure my client has all the information necessary to make the proper decision," he continues. "A lot of times a client will ask me, 'Well, what do you want to do?' I tell them I can make a recommendation to them to take a certain tactical route, but if they're not in favor of it, that's their decision. I stress that I will provide them information for them to make their own decision."

Doing what's best for the client—providing information, keeping them apprised of the case, keeping them patient and calm—has been a foundational philosophy of Coyne since his formative years as an assistant in the Delaware County Public Defenders' Office. During his tenure there, from 1992 to 2000, he defended clients against every type of misdemeanor and felony charge, including first-degree homicide.

"Working there gave me incredible training," says Coyne, who also maintained a private practice of civil and criminal defense law outside Delaware County during that time. "Back when I first started, I had no experience, and I wasted a lot of time on things that wouldn't be of much consequence to the client. But I learned, and getting to work on trials in the public defenders' office got me the experience I needed. I learned lessons even on trials that couldn't be won."

One of his most valuable takeaways from his time in the public defenders' office: Go to the scene. Many times, he notes, criminal defense attorneys rely only on the information gleaned by investigators working for them on a case, and a critical piece of evidence may be overlooked.

"Sometimes, in the public defenders' office,

there were just a few investigators, just not enough of them," he recalls. "The attorneys would go out to the scene themselves. I got into that habit even when I left, doing the legwork by myself. I'd go to the scene and what was described in the charging papers was an impossibility. The Commonwealth didn't expect you to go. I can't tell you how many times I've gone to a neighborhood and the people were interested to see you out there. People would see you and say, 'Wow! You're here!'"

### **The Big Picture**

A lifelong resident of Delaware County, and a graduate of West Chester University and the University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law, Coyne has been successfully defending clients in criminal cases for three decades. He strives to give every client the kind of attention that makes them feel like family. He believes his years working in the public defenders' office gives him a distinct advantage—an insider's perspective on criminal cases and how prosecutors pursue convictions. He knows "every play in their playbook," and works tirelessly to build a defense strategy in an effort to stay several steps ahead of the prosecution.

"One of the skills that helps me defend my clients is that I see the big picture even when the case is just starting out," he says. "It takes a lot of work, effort, and time to get the case where it needs to be. Even if there's a guilty plea, you still have to review the evidence, still be in a position to give him or her the information so they can make the proper decision. Even when you first

get a case, the client may think it'll never go to trial, but you still have to prepare."

Coyne's fascination and interest in criminal law began when he was six years old. His father was an insurance adjuster, and he would tag along on Saturdays when his dad was doing investigations into fraudulent insurance claims.

"We'd meet with Philadelphia attorneys, and I'd see them behind these big mahogany desks and everything," he recalls. "I was just a kid impressed with the attorneys he was dealing with. Dad respected those attorneys because they had integrity."

Coyne has never forgotten his father's teachings on honesty and integrity, and he cherishes the lessons learned during those early years in the public defenders' office. Despite having defended clients for 30 years, he still loves what he does and treats every case as sacred.

"When clients get results, they're incredibly grateful," he said. "Some used to send me Omaha Steaks for Christmas for years. We were able to keep them out of jail, or get them out of jail, and for me there's a satisfaction there. But you can't dwell on that because there's the next person who needs you to help them." ■



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