



Waller culture begins with, thrives on respect



BY RICK WILLIS | SPECIAL TO THE NASHVILLE BUSINESS JOURNAL

One of the hallmarks of Waller Lansden Dortch & Davis, outlined in the first paragraph of the firm's values statement, is that respect is expected among employees.

The collegiality goes way beyond respect; it's the spirit of team and caring. It's the people that make Waller special; people who genuinely like and respect each other.

Even ex-employees benefit from the caring. This month, a former employee's husband passed away and she herself was about to undergo surgery.

A collection was made and employees drove to Knoxville to deliver the gift.

"We provide excellent service to our clients, in which our personnel take great pride," says Ralph Davis, partner and chairman. "From the professional perspective, we always try to recognize extra efforts when we know of them. Sometimes we know about it and sometimes it's kept very quiet, but they are literally so routine that doing so is impossible. Nothing makes

my day any brighter than to hear from a client, as I frequently do, that a lawyer or staff member went the extra mile to provide them with extraordinary service."

Once, when a courier failed to deliver a CD on Saturday of a holiday weekend, a legal assistant – one not really involved in the transaction – called and tracked down the CD and spent the next 20 hours recruiting staff to help with the 12,000-document project.

"Regularly, e-mails are sent out to acknowledge and recognize the contributions to successful completion of projects for clients," Davis said. "We recognize every employee who was involved in the work and talk about the sacrifices they made of family, time and energy to help the firm be able to deliver superior service to our clients."

And employees recognize what they have at Waller: 116 of the roughly 360 people have more than 10 years of service with the firm.

Rick Willis is a freelance writer.