

# VERDICT AND VOICE

*HOW BILL AND ANNE SCHERER TURNED A COURTROOM CAREER INTO A LASTING FAMILY ENTERPRISE, AND A LEGACY THAT SERVES TO ENRICH THE FORT LAUDERDALE COMMUNITY.*

By Jenny Starr Perez

Photography by Arthur Pearson

*On* any given morning in Fort Lauderdale, William “Bill” Scherer is already thinking several moves ahead. A case to shape, a jury to persuade, a strategy to refine. After more than five decades in the courtroom, the veteran trial attorney from Indiana University School of Law still approaches the work with the same urgency he had in the early 1970s, when he first stepped out from behind the bench as a law clerk and onto the trial floor. “I wanted to get in there and be a lawyer on the other side,” he says. “I was tired of being on the clerk side. I watched a lot of good lawyers and tried to take in everything I could.”

That instinct to observe, absorb and outwork became the foundation of what is now Conrad & Scherer Trial Lawyers, one of South Florida’s most formidable litigation firms. But behind the firm’s longevity and reputation is a quieter constant: Anne Scherer, Bill’s wife, business

partner in life and philosophy, and, as he puts it plainly, “the glue that holds us all together.” Their story, like their careers, is layered. It involves law and legacy, certainly, but is also built on music, mentorship and a deep-rooted commitment to community.

Bill’s career has been defined by high-stakes litigation and moments that ripple far beyond the courtroom. He represented President George W. Bush during the 2000 election recount in Florida. “I don’t think it gets more dramatic than that,” he says of the recount. “A nation watching us at Thanksgiving counting chads.” In 2025, he led a trial team that secured an 826-million-dollar verdict that was later amended to over \$1.25 billion dollars on behalf of thousands of Seminole Tribe children. He stood on the brink of another billion-dollar outcome in opioid litigation. Yet for all the headline-making cases, his approach remains grounded in something simpler.

FEATURES





"You cannot outwork us," he says. "If you refuse to let someone outwork you, you'll do just fine."

It is a philosophy he repeats often, especially to the younger attorneys at his firm. Trial work, he explains, is less about flashes of brilliance and more about preparation.

"It doesn't just pop in your head," he says of those moments in court that appear effortless. "Of course I worked 30 hours preparing for that cross-examination."

Anne's path into the firm was less direct, but no less impactful. Trained in speech therapy at Purdue and holding a master's in learning disabilities from Butler, she worked alongside Bill as the couple built their growing real estate portfolio, eventually taking over the properties herself with a broker's license and managing that side of the business while Bill continued to lead the firm.

"I watched him try to manage that and be a lawyer," she says. "Finally, I said, why don't you let me give it a go at the real estate."

From there, her role expanded organically. Today, Anne is deeply involved in Conrad & Scherer's operations while

continuing to serve as President of Scherer Management & Development Realty, supported by the fantastic team that helps manage the company's real estate portfolio. She balances the business side of both organizations with the same discipline and attention to detail that defined her earlier career.

"She's eminently reasonable," Bill says. "Way more than me. She's the manager of the managing partner," he says

Beyond the office, Anne's influence is perhaps most visible in the couple's philanthropic work, particularly with the Broward Center for the Performing Arts. Her connection to the arts runs deep—she is a trained singer who once performed semi-professionally and still lends her voice to St. Anthony's Catholic Church in downtown Fort Lauderdale. "I've always been interested in the arts," she says.

That passion translates into leadership. Through her work with the Broward Center, including her appointment to the Performing Arts Center Authority and current role on the Foundation Board, she has helped support an institution that now draws hundreds of thousands of visitors annually and ranks among the top performing arts centers in the country. "In 2025, it brought in 178 million





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in local economic impact," she notes. "We serve about 650,000 audience members and have one of the largest arts education programs in the nation."

For Anne, the arts are not an accessory to civic life. They are essential. "What would be the destination in Fort Lauderdale if we didn't have the Broward Center?" she says.

The couple's philanthropic reach extends further, from Catholic education initiatives, including the foundation they started at St. Anthony's grade school, which Anne recalls as the first foundation of its kind in the diocese, to mentorship programs for underrepresented high school students interested in law. Through Conrad & Scherer's Pathways to Careers in Law, a partnership with Fort Lauderdale High School and Nova Southeastern University, the firm offers hands-on exposure to the legal field, from courtroom visits to internships. "They don't know any lawyers," Bill says. "They've never seen a judge. So, we show them."

The goal is not only to open doors, but to demystify a profession that can feel out of reach. "If they want to do it, they can do it," he says.

Family, too, plays a central role in the Scherers' story. Their children are deeply connected to the firm and its extended orbit. All three are attorneys, with two practicing at the family firm, while the third serves as President of Gulf Building and has grown it into a successful

construction company behind major projects across South Florida.

It is, in many ways, the embodiment of the legacy they have quietly built. Asked whether legacy is something they think about, Bill pauses.

"What matters to me more is the recognition that our firm's lawyers are getting. It's a big team effort," he says. "It's a heavy question. But yes, of course we do."

For him, that legacy is measured less in accolades and more in continuity—in the firm's ability to endure where others have not, in the next generation of lawyers it shapes, and in the lives it touches along the way. "I've got one really, really good job," he says. "It's the one I wanted when I was young. And I still have it."

Anne's perspective is more understated but equally clear. Whether through the arts, education or community work, her focus remains on building something lasting. Together, their partnership reflects a balance that has defined both their personal and professional lives. Bill, the trial lawyer who thrives in the adrenaline of the courtroom. Anne, the steady force behind the scenes, guiding, organizing and, at times, gently redirecting.

Or, as Bill puts it with a smile, recalling their early years: "She signed me up for the LSAT. She put my application in. That was her doing. Everything started that day." ♦

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