

## **Mentor as...Confidence Builder**

*By Jeremiah J. Moffit, Barrister*

Mary Gillick is the Co-Chair of the Family Wealth and Exempt Organizations Practice Group at Luce Forward. Luce Forward provides first year associates with the opportunity to take projects from every group in the firm, rather than assigning young lawyers immediately to a specific practice area. Thankfully, I promised myself to take full advantage of this opportunity and learn something about the work of each practice group even if I suspected that I may have little or no interest in building a practice in that area of law.

One of the practice areas that I doubted would interest me was trusts and estates work. After all, I thought, death and taxes are two things that I would like to avoid. Nevertheless, I determined to take a project on and as usual, Mary had plenty of work available for those who sought it. After a couple of projects from Mary, I quickly learned how rich in facts and law the world of trust and estate litigation can be. I continued to take on new projects for Mary as soon as I completed the last. Although it would have undoubtedly taken less time for her to do otherwise, Mary has always provided detailed feedback hastening my development as an attorney. Before I knew it, I transitioned with Mary's guidance from project management to case management – taking a major role in hearings, depositions, strategy decisions and client service. While some of my peers were slow to embrace this level of responsibility, I relished the opportunity to take on meaningful work while many of my law school classmates were stuck in large warehouses performing document reviews for weeks on end.

Mary is a zealous advocate for her clients and does not back down from any fight, but she also has taught me much about the importance of integrity and honesty in our profession. By observing and working with her in numerous depositions, mediations, and trials, I have learned much to add to my own skill set. Mary has continued to guide and assist me throughout my career. She has opened many doors to help me develop my own reputation and practice. Her advice on such matters is invaluable, but she also respects my decisions even when they might not always match her advice. Over the past couple of years, I have had the opportunity to try two cases in matters that I largely handled on my own. Not only did Mary trust me to see these matters to their conclusion, but she worked to provide me with the resources, advice and assistance to succeed. Thankfully, both trials ended in excellent results for our clients. Those experiences will forever be amongst my most cherished memories as an attorney. Being able to share these successes with Mary, without whom they would not have been possible, made the experiences far more meaningful.