

KANSAS CITY — ONE OF A LAWYER'S TEN BEST CITIES

The following article, entitled "Looking for a New Place to Practice?", appeared in the March 1992 edition of the ABA Journal and was written by Lawrence Savell. Permission to print this portion of the article has been granted by the ABA Journal.

Despite Kansas City's well deserved reputation for great food, especially steaks and its world-class barbecue, it also has the reputation of offering lawyers a chance to practice without getting roasted in the process.

Kansas City offers a big-city level of practice while still allowing attorneys to enjoy a reasonable quality of life. As C. Patrick McLarney, managing partner of Shook, Hardy & Bacon, says, "Kansas City shines as a mecca for the practice of law because it combines the advantage of a lovely, livable city with a challenging, world-class legal practice."

Kansas City has all the amenities of large cities: theater, ballet, opera, major-

league football and baseball. Yet you can drive from beautiful, tree-lined residential communities with golf courses to work in the center of downtown in 15 minutes. There are no long commutes, no trains and no smog. Lawyers can go home for dinner with their families and return to their offices in the evening because of the easy commuting distance.

Although Kansas City firms have developed an extensive national practice (furthered by a geographically central location) as well as an international practice, the bar is still relatively small.

"Most lawyers know each other," McLarney says. "There is still the collegiality that is associated with the practice of law in the '40s and '50s." One example of the courtesy and cooperation that characterizes Kansas City practice is the monthly Inns of Court program. "Experienced trial lawyers, state and federal judges, and beginning lawyers

gather for trial practice exercises and critiques," McLarney says. "This is followed by adjournment to a local watering hole where all exchange war stories and ideas."

The city's economy is rapidly diversifying from simply being a hub for agriculture-related industry. Among the largest local business players are Hallmark, Farmland Industries (petroleum refining), IBC Holdings (food), and Butler Manufacturing. The city is also home to the Marion Merrell Dow pharmaceuticals company, guaranteeing lawyers beset by the hazards of their profession a fresh supply of vital remedies such as Cepacol throat lozenges and Gaviscon antacid.

Editor's note: The Inn of Court Program referred to by Pat McLarney is sponsored by the Young Lawyers Section of the KCMBA. For more details, read Judge Hanna's article on page 11. □