

[How to Encourage Your Associates the Old Fashioned Way](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on August 22nd, 2013

In most large firms, associates are distinguished by:

1. Their number of billable hours;
2. Their class;
3. Their practice group; and,
4. Their office location.

Before someone can coach or mentor associates, he must know them not only as lawyers, but also as people. I learned this when I was first assigned to be in charge of attorney development at Jenkens & Gilchrist. The associates who did not know me, did not know whether to trust me. I decided I wanted to get to know as many of our associates as possible.

I was able to get to know associates by taking them and their spouses to dinner. Whenever I traveled to one of our offices I would take a group of associates to dinner.



If Nancy could come along with me, we would take three associates and spouses (friends) to dinner. Nancy and I also hosted dinners at our house and we took Dallas associates out to dinner.

As a result, we were invited to weddings, received the first baby pictures and we got to know the associates on a new level.

Now that I am coaching both associates and partners, one of the most important things we do is go to dinner as a group. I get to know the lawyers in a setting different from the office and they get to know each other better.

Encourage your partners to take associates and their spouses to dinner. When partners get to know associates on that personal level, a sense of trust is developed and loyalty is created.

Cordell M. Parvin built a national construction practice during his 35 years practicing law. At Jenkins & Gilchrist, Mr. Parvin was the Construction Law Practice Group Leader and was also responsible for the firm's attorney development practice. While there he taught client development and created a coaching program for junior partners. In 2005, Mr. Parvin left the firm and started Cordell Parvin LLC. He now works with lawyers and law firms on career development and planning and client development. He is the co-author of *Say Ciao to Chow Mein: Conquering Career Burnout* and other books for lawyers. To learn more visit his Web site, www.cordellparvin.com or contact him at cparvin@cordellparvin.com.