

HISTORY

The history and identity of Williams & Connolly LLP are inextricably linked with the life of its founder, Edward Bennett Williams. Recognized as the greatest trial lawyer of his time, he was a spellbinding orator, but also a meticulous cross-examiner - a master in the courtroom, and a craftsman of the written brief. Williams was capable of the calculated theatrical gesture, but he also understood that the key to success in the courtroom was total preparation in advance.

To his colleagues, Williams was larger than life, a force of nature; to the sophisticated world in which he moved, a "*giant among men*." Although he was a counselor to presidents and the powerful, he was also the champion of unpopular, seemingly "*hopeless*" causes. In his hands, however, no cause was hopeless.

Williams combined extraordinary gifts of advocacy with a passion for justice. His commitment to excellence in advocacy and to the zealous representation of clients are his enduring legacy.

In 1967, Williams joined with his former student at Georgetown, Paul Connolly, to form Williams & Connolly. The firm set out to practice law the way its partners lived life - passionately. Williams called it "*contest living*," embracing the competition and fighting relentlessly to win.

The firm has grown steadily over the years. Today it numbers more than 250 attorneys. As the firm has grown, it has brought its founder's competitive spirit to bear in an ever-expanding range of battles.

Yes, the defense of individuals in highly publicized controversies - from Oliver North, to President Clinton, to Vice President Cheney - continues to be a major part of the firm's practice. But as time has passed, more and more of the country's major institutions have retained Williams & Connolly. And although the firm remains, first and foremost, a litigation firm, it has added a tax and business capacity that enables the firm to handle a broad range of non-litigation problems - from the representation of media celebrities, political figures, and sports stars, to the documentation of significant financial and securities transactions.