

Defense is Obear's blazing passion

BY JACK ZEMLICKA

Wisconsin Law Journal

It takes a certain amount of courage to go solo after spending more than a decade in practice.

But having served in Operation Desert Storm with the United States Air Force, attorney Kirk B. Obear was up to the challenge.

The criminal defense attorney departed Melowski, Obear & Cohen in 2008 to open his own office in Sheboygan.

After serving five years in the military, Obear attended the University at Buffalo Law School and graduated in 1994. He returned to the Air Force to work as a military prosecutor until he left active duty to join the Law Offices of Barry S. Cohen in 1999.

Beyond his practice, which focuses on drunken driving and drug defense, Obear served as the President of the Wisconsin Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers in 2007-08 and is an active member of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML).

Obear opened 2011 with this week's Asked & Answered.

Wisconsin Law Journal: If you could develop one CLE course for credit, what would it be about?

Kirk B. Obear: Use of computer technology in litigation. Juries love it, and have come to expect it. We can't be effective litigators without use of modern technology at trial.

WLJ: What are the best holiday gifts you have ever given and received?

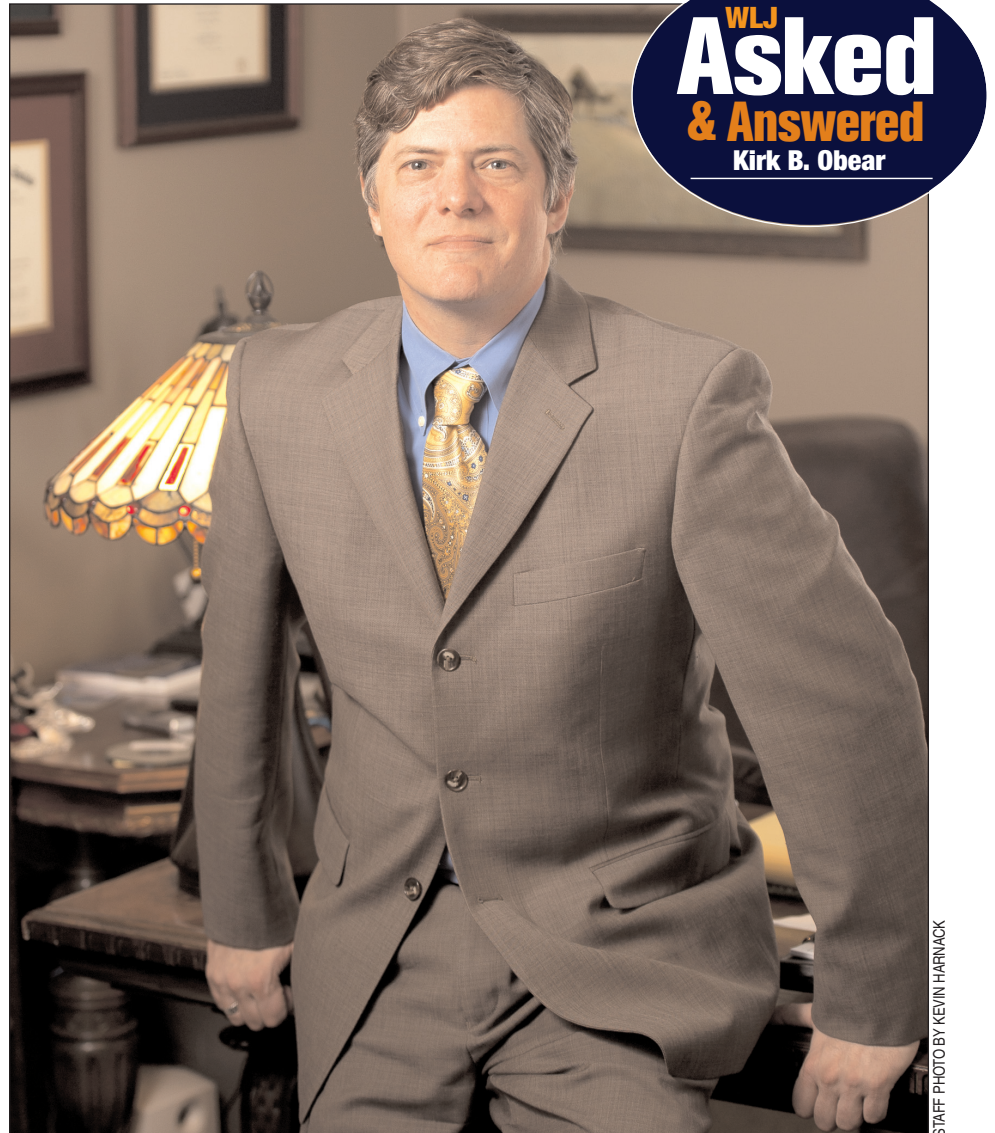
Obear: I have given my kids musical instruments every Christmas and they have all turned into amazing musicians. When my daughter was five years old, she wrote a book about how much she loves me. I still have it and read it all the time.

WLJ: What is your favorite website and why?

Obear: "Old is the New New." robmacdougall.org. "Weird History, Mad Science, Occasional Robots."

WLJ: Which actor would play you in a movie and why?

Obear: Woody Allen. I'm just like him, except in one particular area.



STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN HARNACK

WLJ: What is one thing attorneys should know that they won't learn in law school?

Obear: How to make mistakes and learn from them. There is no substitute for learning by actually doing.

WLJ: What is the first concert you went to?

Obear: KISS, 1976, Buffalo Memorial Auditorium, with my mother.

WLJ: If you could trade places with someone for a day, who would it be and why?

Obear: Someone who had been wrongfully convicted of a crime that he didn't commit and condemned to death. It's impossible to imagine the feeling of hopelessness that one would feel after the justice system had failed. Of course, you said it would only be for one day, right?

WLJ: Which words or phrases do you most overuse?

Obear: "Clearly" "Of course" "Ham Sandwich"

WLJ: What is the one luxury item you cannot live without?

Obear: My iPad

WLJ: If you were State Bar President for a day and could make one permanent change to the profession, what would it be?

Obear: To increase the funding for indigent defense, and to ensure that sufficient resources are available to provide effective, quality defense for persons accused of a crime.

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