

# Technological Changes Over 50 Years in Practice

**Courts and lawyers have found ways to use technology to make the justice system operate more efficiently and conveniently.**

BY GARD STROTHER

**Getting through life and endeavors of employment is, to a great extent, about working hard and continuing to learn.**



**George (Gard) B. Strother IV, U.W. 1974**, has practiced law with Krekeler Law S.C., Madison, for 20 years. He is a member of the State Bar of Wisconsin's Labor & Employment Law and Litigation sections. Strother and other members of the class of 1974 are celebrating 50 years in the legal profession. A 50-year Member Recognition Luncheon will be held in May. Access the digital article at [www.wisbar.org/wl](http://www.wisbar.org/wl). [strother@ks-lawfirm.com](mailto:strother@ks-lawfirm.com)

As I approach my 50-year anniversary of practicing law, I think about the profound impact of technology on our profession during the past 50 years. Much of this change has occurred in the last two decades, part of the revolution in communications that has become part of

the daily functioning of U.S. society and certainly most, if not all, of us in the legal profession.

I often find myself reminded about the effects of technology, particularly computers, word processing, and record keeping, on lawyers' daily lives. In the early years of practicing, I was intrigued with the then-available computers and their impact on the way we conducted our business.

This was true of the judiciary as well as the day-to-day practices of lawyers in the community. Early on, the computers with which lawyers – and people generally – found themselves working were primitive compared to computers that are routinely used today. This also was true for the judicial system, which has, in a variety of ways, brought computers into the process of managing the courts.

I did not learn much about computers or computer programming during college or law school, but that learning process did begin, in a limited way, before I enrolled in law school. I have become more adept at navigating the sometimes-turbulent waters of learning to use computers daily in the workplace.

It has not always been easy – and it still isn't, given the rapid changes that continue to confront us as we try to efficiently attend to clients' needs. The common use of email

communication and electronic filing and disseminating of legal documents in and about the court system is beneficial. Lawyers and courts have found ways to use technology to make the court system operate more efficiently and conveniently.

I find myself participating in court proceedings that are now conducted by phone or video conference. I often use emails to communicate with clients and other attorneys.

I could go on at length about various astonishing developments in how lawyering has been affected by the technological changes over the past 50 years, especially in the past 10 or so years.

Time marches on for everyone and is especially noticeable for those of us in a professional endeavor such as lawyering. I hope I can continue to learn how to use technology more efficiently for however long I continue to practice law.

Getting through life and endeavors of employment is, to a great extent, about working hard and continuing to learn, something I intend to do as I negotiate the years ahead. **WL**