

CANCIENNE LAW FIRM

515 BARROW STREET
HOUMA, LOUISIANA 70360
TEL. (985) 876-5656
FAX (985) 876-5659

ATTORNEYS:

L. MILTON CANCIENNE JR.*
milton@houmaestates.com

TROY D. CANCIENNE
troy@houmaestates.com

* Louisiana Board Certified Specialist
in Estate Planning & Administration

PARALEGAL:

LAUREN A. MOLAISSON
lauren@houmaestates.com

WHAT I LEARNED AFTER LAW SCHOOL by Troy D. Cancienne

Immediately after graduating from L.S.U. in 1997 with a major in Finance, I entered Loyola Law School in New Orleans. I rented a very small house in Metairie and negotiated the rent down by agreeing to do the grass cutting and lawn care that my landlord had been adding to the rent.

In my first two years of law school, I was learning and understanding the material being taught, but I was making a lot of Bs and some Cs. By my senior year, I had learned that the professors wanted me to be a parrot and to write the exams in their words rather than my own. I decided to focus my effort on memorizing the course work and writing my exams word for word as lectured, and I made almost all As. So, who do you think is the better attorney, one who studies and understands law or one who memorizes law?

I finished law school in May of 2000 and immediately started studying for the bar exam. In addition to studying my law school notes, I enrolled in a bar exam review course by the name "Barbri." I'll always believe that I learned more in this bar exam review course than I learned in three years of law school. Of course, I realize that I would not have been able to learn so much in the bar exam review course if I not had the three years of foundation that I received in law school. I took the bar exam the summer of 2000 and passed it the first time.

I began practicing law with my father upon completion of the bar exam and being sworn in by the Louisiana Supreme Court. When my father began practicing law, he did all kinds of legal work to make a living including income tax returns, real estate transactions, collection work, estate planning (Wills, Powers of Attorney, etc.) and successions. However, by the time I started practicing with him, our law practice was 80% to 90% estate planning and handling successions.

In August of 2003, to further my legal education, I attended a short course on the subject of Trusts and Estates presented by NYU (New York University) held in New York City.

Later in 2003, I began a clerkship with Terrebonne Parish District Judge Johnny Walker to further my legal experience and to get some familiarity with the courtroom. The clerkship was supposed to be for a year but extended to 14 months after which I returned to the Cancienne Law Firm.

As I mentioned, my undergraduate college major was Finance and it fit very well with the legal specialty of estate planning and successions. In 2007, to further my education in this area, I took and completed the course work for Certified Financial Planner (CFP) from the

College for Financial Planning in Centennial (Denver), Colorado. This was done as a correspondence course. The CFP course work was taught in five modules; Financial Planning Process and Insurance, Investment Planning, Income Tax Planning, Retirement Planning and Employee Benefits, Estate Planning, and Financial Plan Development. It was never my intention to be a financial planner but I wanted the knowledge that was available through these courses that were more in depth than the law school courses that I had taken. All of these courses are part of the work I do writing Wills and handling estates.

The L.S.U. Law School, Center of Continuing Professional Development, offers a two day seminar each year to update attorneys on changes in Louisiana law, estate taxes, and also notable cases that the courts have decided during the past year. I have attended these seminars each year that I have been an attorney with the exception of the time I clerked for Judge Walker.

From time to time, the Louisiana Society of Certified Public Accountants presents a seminar titled Estate and Gift Taxation (A Louisiana Perspective) as well as seminars on other topics involving taxation. I began attending these seminars in 2004 and have attended seven of them over the years. I think I have been to only one of these seminars at which an attorney other than a member of the Cancienne Law Firm was present.

In 2010, my father and I began handling a rather large succession with a variety of assets. The decedent had grown children, a son and a daughter. Their father had purchased \$60,000.00 of bearer bonds, put them in a bank deposit box, and forgot about them until years later, long after the bonds had matured and the principal was payable. Our clients told us that the bearer bonds had been turned over to the Unclaimed Property Division of the Louisiana State Treasury and that their father had tried to collect the bonds without success. The son had also tried to collect them without success. I personally went to the Department of Treasury in an attempt to collect the bonds and was told that Unclaimed Property did not have these bonds. I called a stockbroker I know and asked which banks were most likely to serve as trustee for such bond issues, and the broker gave me the names of two banks in New York City. I wrote a letter to both banks, and one bank wrote back that it was the trustee for the bond issue in question. It also gave me the book and page on which this unclaimed property was listed in the Unclaimed Property Division. When I personally went to the Unclaimed Property Division the second time with this new information, I was able to collect the \$60,000 for my client. The lady at Unclaimed Property who assisted me told me that their indexing system was such that they did not know that the bonds had been turned over to them. My dad believes that, after being told that Unclaimed Property did not have the bonds, there are very few attorneys who (1) would have continued trying to find the bonds and (2) would have figured out how to find the bonds.

In 2017, I handled a succession for a person who had died leaving a surviving spouse. The surviving spouse had been married prior to the marriage of her husband who died in 2017, and she learned from the Social Security Administration that she could collect approximately \$400 per month more based on the social security paid by her first husband than she could based on the social security paid in by her second husband who had died recently. However, she needed a copy of her marriage license for her first marriage that she did not have nor did she know where they had obtained the marriage license. She knew that they had been married in her hometown in Texas. From this I knew

that she had to have a Texas marriage license. She and her first husband had been in school in North Louisiana when they married. Finally, she remembered that they had gone to a courthouse in Texas that was close to where they were in school to obtain a marriage license. She did not know where. After contacting a number of clerk of court's offices in Texas, I finally was able to obtain a copy of her marriage license from the Clerk of Court of Marshall, Texas. With the copy of the marriage license, my client was able to get the \$400 per month additional in social security benefits.

My parents had me take a Johnson O'Connor aptitude test when I was in high school, and one of the vocations or professions the test suggested that I would enjoy was private detective. Based on the two above cases, the test was accurate.

When I am not practicing law, my hobby is fishing. My dad says that if the word "fishing" comes up in the office, it usually causes a moderate to lengthy detour of the legal matter at hand. My boat is a 1967 Boston Whaler that my father purchased when he was 27 years old. I recently purchased a kayak that pedals like a bicycle. I can put the kayak in the back of my truck and use it to fish in shallow water that cannot be reached otherwise.

I have had the pleasure of practicing law with my father since 2000. We teach each other things almost every day, and I know that my legal education and experience will never end.