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Jaeckle and Fleischmann: A Merger of Titans

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Alumni Profiles



Edwin F. Jaeckle '15



Manly Fleischmann '33

Jaeckle and Fleischmann: a merger of titans

*Author uncovers the rich history
behind one of Buffalo's premier law firms*

Jaeckle.

Fleischmann.

If you have spent any time in the Buffalo legal community, you know the names. But you may not know the personal stories and professional accomplishments of Edwin F. Jaeckle '15 and Manly Fleischmann '33, who merged their practices in 1955 to create the powerhouse firm now known as Jaeckle Fleischmann & Mugal LLP.

A new book by Edward L. Cuddihy, a former managing editor of *The Buffalo*

News, brings a historian's eye and a storyteller's craft to the lives of two of UB Law School's most famous alumni. *The Merging of Titans: A History of the Law Firm That Bears Their Names* was a two-year project that began when the firm commissioned Cuddihy to write its corporate history.

"They wanted to do this while there were still people around who remembered Manly Fleischmann and Ed Jaeckle when they were alive," says Cuddihy. One of his

key sources was founding partner Adelbert Fleischmann, Manly's baby brother, who just celebrated his 95th birthday.

"I was happy to be interviewed by Ed Cuddihy several times for this book, and I did the best I could to recall the events and personalities that shaped our wonderful firm," says Adelbert Fleischmann, who is now retired from practice.

Cuddihy did a little research; a quick survey of the *New York Times* database yielded 175 stories on Jaeckle, around 80

on Fleischmann. The *Washington Post* and *Time* magazine yielded more material. Cuddihy decided, "These were big-time national figures that people in Buffalo may not know. They were the kind of people that, if they lived in our time, you would see them on the news all the time."

So he returned to the firm with a proposal that the book comprise short biographies of each man, as well as a corporate history. After voluminous research (much of it by Cuddihy's wife, Irene E. Cuddihy, Ph.D.) and interviewing, the result is a detail-packed narrative of two very different lawyers, a generation apart in age, and the influence each had on the politics and legal community of his day.

"The excitement for me is to get down in writing these two major figures that could easily be overlooked by history," Cuddihy says. "The way people do not get overlooked is by someone writing about them."

In many ways they were an unlikely pairing. Ed Jaeckle was a progressive Rockefeller Republican and a would-be kingmaker who backed New York Gov. Thomas E. Dewey in two losing presidential campaigns. In their Buffalo law practice, "he was the rainmaker," Cuddihy says. "He knew everyone in Buffalo who was up-and-coming, and he knew how to get things done. He was the hand-shaker, the back-patter, the consummate politician." Always impeccably dressed, he could often be seen in the back of his chauffeured limousine.

Jaeckle saw politics as a means to the greater end of public service, and he believed in the responsibility of lawyers to contribute to civic affairs.

By contrast, Cuddihy says, Manly Fleischmann, a registered Independent, was "almost apolitical. He was by all accounts a brilliant lawyer. Fleischmann also was on the national stage, taking on positions of enormous power and influence in the federal government.

During the Korean War, President Truman appointed him Administrator of the National Production Authority and head of the Defense Production Administration.

For two years he oversaw the allocation of scarce materials, balancing the interests of an increasingly consumerist society with the needs of the war effort. Said *Harper's* magazine: "Fleischmann is the man whose decisions determine how many television and radio sets will be built next month and next year. He decides ... how much steel Detroit may have for passenger cars, how much rubber Akron may have for tires."

Fleischmann also was commissioned by Gov. Nelson Rockefeller in 1969 to study public education in New York, including the way it was funded, and to recommend improvements. The result was a massive two-volume report, and Cuddihy says, "If you read it today, you see that they were dealing with fundamental issues we are still struggling with today – financing education, how to serve students with special needs."

As UB Law School graduates, along with fellow founding partner Albert R. Mugel '41, they remained close to the University, Cuddihy says. "Because Al Mugel was an adjunct professor all during this time, the firm was hiring the best people from UB Law School." And, of course, the Law School's highest award is named for Edwin F. Jaeckle. Manly Fleischmann served for

many years as a trustee of the State University system.

Cuddihy says the project fed his longtime interest in Buffalo and New York State history. "The most fun," he says, "was reliving Ed Jaeckle's political life, being able to piece together, step by step, Jaeckle from the time he met Dewey in Saratoga Springs (for the 1938 state Republican Convention) to the time he waved goodbye to Dewey in 1948. I was reading and hearing about Alf Landon and Wendell Willke. These were names out of the past, but they were talking to Ed Jaeckle. To me, that was real history."

The Merging of Titans was privately printed for in-house use, but those interested in obtaining a copy may e-mail mmcdonnell@jaeckle.com.

"Cuddihy did a damn good job," observed Adelbert Fleischmann.



Erma R. Hallett-Jaeckle '36 and husband Edwin F. Jaeckle '15 at the Deans Dinner, 1988.

From the book:

One of the highlights of Fleischmann's Washington years was the time in the Fall of 1952 when he and his wife Lois flew to the West Coast for a speech. Lois hated to fly so they planned a cross-country train ride back to Washington. But a call from the White House changed that and Manly flew back to Washington on his own. The occasion was a meeting of the Cabinet with Winston Churchill. Fleischmann found an empty chair in the back row of the cabinet room and Winston Churchill came in with British foreign secretary Anthony Eden and President Truman. Churchill quipped that this time, the Brits had come "not for aid but for trade." He praised the nation's program designed to supply the free world with weapons while keeping the economy going at home. He praised the author of the plan and asked if Manly Fleischmann was in the room. To applause from the cabinet, Truman called Manly to the head table where the men shook hands all around.

Later in the day, Secretary of State Dean Acheson held a quiet party for his British guests, and Churchill and Fleischmann had a long chat about defense production. "And mother missed that too," said Manly's daughter Alison. "She was on a train somewhere out west." However this meeting led to a return visit to London in 1957, this time with Lois Fleischmann. (Editor's note: Lois later changed her attitude toward flying after Manly was appointed to the board of directors of American Airlines.)



Manly Fleischmann '33 and wife Lois.