

Woburn litigator also makes his mark as landscape artist

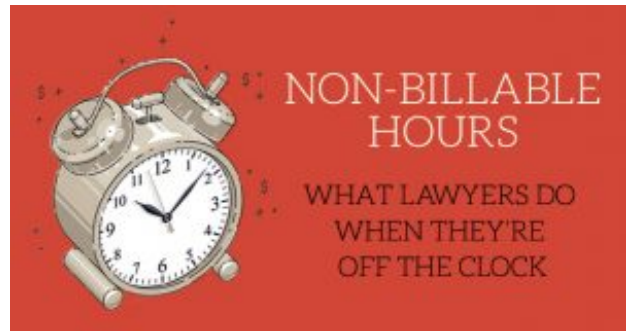
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Woburn attorney Andrew Botti never saw himself becoming a full-time artist, yet a natural — some would say hereditary — talent for oil painting has him creating works of note in a modest basement studio.

The director of McLane Middleton's litigation department, Botti set his sights on becoming a lawyer back when he was in the ninth grade. But even at a young age he discovered that he also loved to paint.

"I kind of picked up a brush and started painting different things, doing it in my spare time after school," the self-taught artist says.



Botti attributes his passion to his late aunt, Anna Montone, an accomplished painter who made her mark in the Boston art scene. As an undergrad at Columbia University in New York, Botti majored in art history. It was there that he landed his first painting on commission: a portrait of the patron's favorite racehorse at Aqueduct Racetrack in New York.

But despite finding that there was a market for his work, Botti never deviated from his plans of becoming a lawyer.

"The reading, writing and analysis of legal work have always been a love of mine," he says. "I don't see giving it up."

Botti spends an hour or so after work painting in his studio, drawn to the idea of creating something from nothing.

“You work hard at it and try to get an image that you enjoy and other people enjoy,” he says, adding that “it’s a great way to relax even though it can be frustrating when you’re not getting the exact image that you want.”

After starting with water colors as a youth, Botti discovered oil painting was more to his liking.



“Water colors have a tendency to dry too fast, and you can’t really manipulate the colors,” he says. “Oil painting is almost like working with clay: If you don’t like what you’ve done, you can change it without having to start over.”

Though Botti does the occasional portrait, he mostly paints landscapes drawn from photographs he has taken. A personal favorite is an oil painting of Agripoli, the coastal town in Italy where his grandfather was from.

He also paints more familiar landscapes, such as New England lighthouses, fall scenes and snow-covered fields. His work hangs in his office, with friends and clients occasionally the recipients of coffee mugs that bear images of his various paintings.



He has even been known to gift his paintings, but only under special circumstances. He and Boston attorney Lesa M. Stramondo (who would go on to become his wife) worked together at another firm. The two were dating but wanted to keep it under wraps. Botti gave Lesa one of his paintings, which she promptly hung in her office.

When another associate expressed his admiration for the artwork and asked where she had gotten it, Lesa told the associate she picked it up at a yard sale.

“I felt a little insulted, frankly, but I was laughing,” Botti recalls.

Today, Botti sells his work, with original paintings fetching upwards of \$1,000, and prints priced between \$250 and \$350.

A client recently offered him space for a showing, which Botti is considering for the spring.

If you are, or know of, a Massachusetts lawyer who has a passion for an interesting activity or hobby — whether it's free climbing sheer cliff faces, raising llamas, or dressing up like a minuteman on Patriots Day — contact Pat Murphy at pmurphy@lawyersweekly.com.