Insights: News

Jurassic Park And The Negative Perception Of Lawyers

Forbes

JULY 16, 2025

"One heartwarming case of altruism in the legal profession centers on the law firm of Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Years ago, Kilpatrick adopted Cook Elementary School, an inner-city elementary school in Winston-Salem. Lawyers in the firm voluntarily mentor students. The firm also invites students to programs that acquaint them with the profession as well as provide guidance relevant to social etiquette and academic studies.

The results have been profound. Cook Elementary has experienced improved test scores. Perhaps equally noteworthy has been the effect that the firm's efforts have had on the students themselves. Many have expressed how meaningful their experiences with the Kilpatrick attorneys have been, with others now aspiring to do what it takes to succeed.

Other lawyers nationwide have devoted countless hours to pro bono activities. The bar associations in most states encourage lawyers in their districts to provide free legal services and often trumpet the good deeds of lawyers in their jurisdictions.

Lawyers, similar to professionals in other disciplines, have committed their share of transgressions. Any profession may have individuals who act opportunistically and violate rules of professional responsibility. Most professions, and in particular the legal profession, self-regulate with a plethora of ethical rules and sanctions when those rules are violated. Violations of lawyers' rules of professional responsibility often come with penalties ranging from reprimands to expulsion or debarment.

To ensure public confidence in the justice system, the legal profession must augment its regulatory function with a concerted and deliberate effort to educate the public about the salience of lawyers in a modern democracy. This educative strategy should include highlighting the many ways that lawyers selflessly give back to their communities.

If the legal profession accepts the charge of heralding the good deeds of lawyers, public perception of lawyers could improve and reinforce the efficacy of the justice system. Perhaps then, when audiences witness the demise of a lawyer in an entertainment medium, their reaction may be more reflective of sympathy rather than satisfying delight."

Read the full article here.