



Steve Younger – Lawyer and ADR Pro

These days, Steve Younger is a very busy guy. Besides being a partner in the firm of [Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler LLP](#) in New York City, he has just assumed the office of President of the [New York State Bar Association](#) (NYSBA). That might be enough for most people, but Younger is also an accomplished ADR practitioner with a specialization in commercial arbitration and mediation. He has been involved in ADR for more than 20 years and it all started, according to Younger, from “frustration with a failed arbitration process.”

Younger came to ADR in the same way many lawyers do. He started his education at Harvard, graduating in 1977 with a BA in History. From there he studied law at Albany Law School, graduating in 1982 (where his classmates included NYSDRA Executive Director Linda Cohen). A busy person even in law school, he was also Editor In Chief of the Albany Law Review. His first job was as law clerk to the Hon. Hugh R. Jones at the New York State Court of Appeals where he served from 1982 to 1984. After that he moved to his current firm and was made a partner in 1985. Younger says “wonderful mentors and hard work,” were what brought him to his current place.

He also credits several people along the way. “I had incredible mentors like Judge Richard Bartlett, Judge Hugh Jones and Judge Harold Tyler.” But with his obvious success as a commercial litigator, why does he also choose to spend so much time in ADR? “It is far more satisfying than conventional litigation,” noted Younger. “I regularly represent financial institutions, mutual funds, hedge funds, pension funds and venture capital firms in commercial, securities and real estate disputes. Due to my experience in the ADR field, I am often called on to serve as an arbitrator or mediator in high-stake matters,” he added.

And those cases are many and varied. Younger won a stock exchange arbitration involving failed securities trades on behalf of a brokerage firm. He mediated a dispute over liabilities assumed in a corporate takeover and he successfully defended a publishing company in arbitration seeking to enforce provisions of a shareholders’ agreement. In addition, Younger noted that he chaired the arbitration panel in an international dispute over a merger and acquisition transaction. He also mediated a series of disputes over bond defaults by Ecuador. Younger represented a real estate developer in multi-day arbitration hearings in a complex construction dispute. He also served as lead counsel in mediation of a dispute over a large bequest to The Nixon Presidential Library.

Younger sees his experience in ADR in terms of how the practice and general law have changed in the last 25 years. He sees ADR as something that has become more common among lawyers. “Mediation has become a regular part of the lawyer’s toolbox,” said Younger.

In addition to his elected position with the State Bar, Younger has sat on numerous NYSBA committees. He is past Chair of the Commercial and Federal Litigation Section its Securities Litigation Committee and its ADR Committee. He is also the Chair of the Executive Committee of the [International Institute for Conflict Prevention and Resolution](#), and served as a member of Chief Judge Judith Kaye’s ADR Task Force. The funny thing is, you get the idea Younger, despite these accomplishments, has a lot more in store. He definitely wants to further explore ADR by “devoting more time to serving as a neutral.”

In the next 25 years, Younger thinks we'll probably see more growth in ADR. He looks for, "continued mainstream acceptance of ADR and development of new ADR techniques." This is the same mission that NYSDRA is pushing through its marketing and media campaigns. Younger noted that his involvement with NYSDRA has been helpful in his ADR work as it "Exposed me more to community-based models." With an ADR pro like Younger at the head of the powerful NYSBA, one can only imagine how much we can expect to see ADR grow in the coming years.

How a person conducts business on a daily basis is a function of their philosophy and experience. Some people like to use a guiding principle or quote. Younger is no different. When it comes to his ADR work, Younger refers to one of our founding fathers, Benjamin Franklin, who said, "There never was a good war or a bad peace."