

Warner, Wallace, McLaren, & Dague

Founded: 1889

Location: Southeast corner of the courthouse, Muncie (1889); 403 Western Reserve Building (1934); 330 East Main Street (1972); 400 East Jackson Street (1993)

The oldest law firm in continuous operation in Muncie and Delaware County began as the offices of Ryan & Warner in 1889. Rollin Warner had moved his law practice from New Castle to Muncie. He associated with John W. Ryan for a short time before forming a partnership in 1892 with Arthur Brady, the mayor of Muncie. Warner acted as the Muncie city attorney between 1892 and 1903. Warner and Brady continued their association for nine years. In 1903 Brady left to take a general counsel position with the Union Traction Company.

Rollin Warner was the son of Eli and Emily Warner of Blountsville, Indiana. In 1879, at the age of twenty-one, he left Blountsville for Winchester. Instead of formal legal training, which was not required at the time, he became an apprentice to Judge Leander J. Monks, a future state supreme court justice. Warner was admitted to the bar in Henry, Randolph, and Delaware Counties in the same year and began practicing in New Castle. While in New Castle he served as city attorney. A decade after his apprenticeship ended he removed his office to Muncie, where he actively participated in Republican politics. Warner was elected city attorney in 1892, served two terms on the school board, and ran for Congress in 1910.

Arthur W. Brady, a native of Muncie, had the formal training that his partner lacked, graduating from Yale University and Michigan Law School. He had also read law at his uncle's law office in Fort Wayne. Similar to Warner, Brady was active in party politics. Brady, however, associated with the Democratic party. He was elected Muncie's mayor in 1891.

After Brady left the firm, Rollin Warner continued alone until his son, Everett, joined him in 1908. The office of Warner & Warner continued to be a father-son affair until Ray W.

Clark joined the firm in 1927. The name of the legal company changed to Warner, Clark & Warner, a designation not altered until 1972. Everett was born in New Castle in 1882. He went to the University of Southern California for his undergraduate degree, studied law at Indiana University, Indianapolis, and joined the Warner family firm after his former law partner retired.

Between 1927 and 1972 only one new partner was added, not affecting the firm's designation. Edwin Warner joined the association in 1941. He attended DePauw University for his undergraduate degree before moving on to Northwestern Law School, graduating in 1941. He joined his father and grandfather before the outbreak of World War II, leaving the firm during the war to serve in the armed forces.

In 1972 Ray Clark died and a new partner was accepted. Darrel K. Peckinpugh, another Muncie native, had attended Purdue University, graduating with a B.S. in 1963, and Indiana University, receiving a LL.B. in 1966. A Democratic activist, he served as deputy prosecutor for the county in 1966 and 1969, sat as a member of the Delaware County Planning Commission between his stints as prosecutor, and accepted the post of Muncie city attorney in 1972. In 1970 he served a one-year term as president of the Muncie Bar Association.

Change came quickly after 1972. Between 1977 and 1993 four new partners appeared, and two left or retired. Edwin Warner retired from his grandfather's firm, remaining a counsel to the organization. Peckinpugh left after 1977. David S. Wallace, a graduate of Indiana University Law School, became a partner in 1977. Wallace continued in the post of city attorney, a position he had held since 1972. When he ended his affiliation with Muncie he accepted the post of attorney for the town board of Gaston in 1979, serving for six years. Wallace was president of the Muncie Bar Association for 1983–84.

Bruce McLaren and Linda Jo Clark Dague rose to become partners in 1985 and 1986, respectively. They were both graduates of Indiana University Law School. Dague had grown up in Muncie, while McLaren had spent his youth in Belleville, Michigan. McLaren had been the executive secretary of the State Beverage Commission before joining the firm, while Dague had held a number of posts including one as the national editor for Pi Lambda Theta from 1975 until 1980. Todd Glass, another Muncie native and Wabash College graduate, accepted a partnership briefly in the early 1990s, after completing his legal education at the University of Dayton.

In 1998 the firm's work included insurance defense, corporation, commercial, real estate, social security, probate, workers' compensation, and family law.