

Coolidge Wall is one of the oldest law firms in Ohio and has perhaps the deepest legal roots in the Dayton community. The firm was founded in 1853 as Gunckel & Strong and has operated continuously ever since, changing its name from time to time as generations of lawyers have advanced the practice.

Lewis Gunckel and Hiram Strong were united by a shared commitment to excellence, nourished by “character, study, and work.” They also set a continuing standard for community service. Strong served in the 93rd Ohio Regiment during the Civil War. Gunckel pushed for Dayton to be the site for the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (now the Dayton Medical VA Center). Gunckel was also the founding father of Associated Charities of Dayton, an organization that continues today as Family Services Association.

As the legal baton passed from generation to generation, the firm became known for its high-quality legal services. During the long tenure of J. Bradford Coolidge, the legal practice became known as the “Coolidge Firm,” with a reputation for excellence that has endured to the present.

Coolidge Wall is now a legal professional association with more than forty lawyers. As the firm moves forward, it continues to pursue a broad range of legal practice areas, including corporate-business transactions, real estate, taxation, estate planning, health care law, environmental regulation, employee benefits, labor and public sector representation. The practice continues to reflect and adapt to changes in the Dayton economy, the legal profession, and the level of governmental regulation.

Current lawyers from Coolidge Wall continue the service example of Gunckel and Strong in their efforts to strengthen the quality of life in the community and to further the business and personal interests of all community members.

Lawyers at Coolidge have served on the governing boards of many cultural and arts organizations. These include Joe Gruenberg at the Dayton Ballet, the Dayton Art Institute, the Victoria Theatre, and Culture Works, Merle Wilberding at The Muse Machine

and the Dayton Literary Peace Prize, Sam Warwar at the Dayton Art Institute and the Dayton Ballet, Steve Herbert at the Dayton Philharmonic, David Pierce at the Human Race Theater, Rick Talda at the South Dayton Dance Theatre, Chris Conard at the Dayton Visual Arts Center, Allison Michael at the Dayton Playhouse, and Brent Gambill at the Ballet Theatre in Cincinnati.

Joe Gruenberg made a special contribution to the creation and success of Culture Works as he participated actively in the transition from the Arts Dayton organization to the new Culture Works structure. During those years, he had served as a trustee on the board for eight years, including two years as treasurer and two years as Chairman. In 2007, Culture Works presented Coolidge Wall with the *Encore Award* for outstanding growth in its participation and contribution to our community arts and culture.

The firm has also extended its community involvement by participating in the Leadership Dayton program since its inception. Twelve of its current lawyers are graduates. This is part of the firm’s continuing effort to engage in the constructive dialogues that are necessary to support and improve our community.

The lawyers at Coolidge Wall are especially proud of their service on the boards of more than thirty civic and charitable organizations that are outside the Culture Works umbrella. In addition, through their individual and United Way contributions, they provide financial support to an even larger number of these important community organizations. While individual lawyers choose organizations based on their special interests, all of them recognize the importance of giving back to the community in appreciation for the opportunities the community has given the Coolidge firm.

The Coolidge Wall law firm seeks not only to provide excellent legal services to its clients, but also to make its mark on our cultural institutions and our community organizations. Coolidge Wall, like many other firms and businesses in the Miami Valley, recognizes that its lawyers must invest themselves in the community in order to improve the quality of life for themselves and for those around them. The firm is dedicated to making a difference in the community.

