

# MANKO | GOLD | KATCHER | FOX LLP

AN ENVIRONMENTAL AND ENERGY LAW PRACTICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: SFPR – 215-627-0801

Sharla Feldscher, ext. 101

[Sharla@sf-pr.com](mailto:Sharla@sf-pr.com)

Allison Cradic, ext. 102

[Allison@sf-pr.com](mailto:Allison@sf-pr.com)

**CELEBRATING TWENTY YEARS ...  
REFLECTIONS FROM THE FOUNDERS OF  
MANKO, GOLD, KATCHER & FOX, LLP**

(Philadelphia, PA – August 10, 2010) -- Twenty years ago, the condition of the environment was of some interest but nothing like it is today. Only visionaries would have thought they could base an entire law practice on the subject. And, those visionaries are thrilled that today they are about to celebrate twenty-one years of a practice that continues to grow and maintain its original principles.

Manko, Gold, Katcher & Fox, LLP, the highly recognized Bala Cynwyd and Cherry Hill boutique law firm, concentrates its practice on environment, energy and land use law and litigation. The seeds for an environmental practice really were sown in the early 1970s when Joseph M. Manko and Marc E. Gold were lawyers at the Environmental Protection Agency Middle Atlantic Region based in Philadelphia. They joined with Bruce S. Katcher to form an Environmental Department at Wolf, Block, Schorr and Solis-Cohen in the late-70s. Finally, the germ of a stand-alone practice took root in September, 1989, founded by Manko, Gold and Katcher, with strong impetus from then five-year attorney Robert D. Fox. They, and the balance of the Wolf Block department, all for various reasons including dissatisfaction with a large firm management philosophy, decided to leave Wolf Block and form their own firm with philosophies that fit their professional

and personal needs. Marc Gold laughs when he says, “Our vision was to create an environmental law firm, and people thought we were crazy for even considering it.”

Now, more than twenty years later and ranked in the top tier of national and global environmental law firms year after year by Best Lawyers in America and Chambers USA, the four partners reflected on the past. Manko, who has always been considered a pioneer in Philadelphia’s environmental law community, says, “We always knew we wanted to start a boutique environmental firm with an engineering component.” Katcher added, “A large part of our goal was to combine consulting and legal services, which was never done before. It was, and still is, truly entrepreneurial. One of the key reasons for doing this was to be cost-effective for our clients and to build a team with environmental breadth and depth.

Another success factor is the firm’s key operations principles. Gold put it this way: “Joe set the tone that the culture of the firm be family-oriented, where quality of life would be valued. We all felt the same way and it’s why we knew we would always get along.” This principle is still a key factor in what makes MGKF stand out. Quality of life is valued for every staff person at the firm, from secretarial to the partners. As an example, they developed an award-winning customized employment policy, creating work schedules to accommodate the personal needs of the staff. Fox, who is now the firm’s managing partner, said, “I’m incredibly proud of what we’ve created – it’s so unique how we treat our employees.”

Two other key principles are to always do interesting, challenging work and have a high caliber of staff. Gold continued, “We never take our reputation for granted. We work with agencies and many different corporations and, from the day we started, we knew that we could only gain their confidence if they trusted us and had confidence in our firm.” Fox talks about the staff acknowledging their value. “We have an incredibly talented group at MGKF with very little turnover. It’s personally rewarding to know that the attorneys, technical experts and our support staff like it here and choose to stay.”

Two more principles round out the firm's overall philosophy – to make a good living and to give back to the community. Making a good living is, of course, important to maintain the quality of staff but attorneys seek out MGKF because of quality of life and work principles more than financial gain. In 1988, Manko and Fox started teaching at the University of Pennsylvania Law School. Not only was teaching there personally fulfilling, it also led to hiring opportunities. The firm has hired at least a dozen students from Penn, students who understood the firm's culture and sought to practice at MGKF after taking Manko and Fox's classes. As an example, one of their partners today, Bart Cassidy, now nationally recognized for his knowledge on air issues, was one of their students.

And, finally, giving back to the community is a strong priority at MGKF. Most of the 29 attorneys associated with the firm today volunteer for various environmental-based organizations, demonstrating their deep felt commitment to the environment and their personal desire to make the world a better place. In addition, the firm has been involved in many campaigns that educate and reward environmental stewardship. For example, several years ago the firm sponsored a slogan contest in Lower Merion Township for high school students. The winning slogan, "Save our tomorrow; Recycle today" can still be seen on trash and recycling trucks throughout the township. And for the past five years, the firm has partnered with NBC 10 and Wawa to run the Environmental Community Service Award; to date, 10 middle schools and high schools in the region have been chosen to receive financial grants for their outstanding environmental programs that enrich their communities.

Thinking back twenty years, the worldwide focus on the environment has been on a pendulum, but never has it had more importance globally than it does today. Katcher said, "Now, there is a renewed interest in the environment over concerns of global warming/climate change. Businesses want to use sustainable practices more than ever." Gold agreed, "Not only are environmental issues hot again, companies want to 'out-green' others in the global market." Gold recalled the early years and said, "When

we began the firm, air, water and waste were traditional issues we handled with clients. Sustainability, carbon footprint and energy conservation hadn't emerged yet."

Katcher added, "Today the firm is expanding its focus to include sources of renewable energy like wind and solar." Fox said, "And, the discovery of Marcellus Shale has provided more opportunities for growth as this natural resource can be tapped as alternative fuel." Manko said, "Working in the field of environment means that work will always be challenging and interesting as it is ever-evolving and changing. That's the beauty of practicing law in this field."

When remembering twenty some years ago, Manko said, "If you look at each person's journey through life, there is always opportunity if you're ready for it. If I hadn't learned that the EPA was looking for a new regional general counsel in 1973, I would never have left Wolf Block. In hindsight I realize that leaving the firm for two years to take that EPA job, brought me knowledge that was very important in starting an environmental practice at Wolf Block and then opening our own practice." He continued, "If Robb hadn't told me he was ready to leave Wolf Block and wanted to continue working with me, and if Bruce and Marc hadn't shared my same philosophy of doing good work while maintaining quality of life, our firm would never have launched. I'm grateful for all these experiences because I am truly proud of what our firm is today."

In Katcher's point of view, "The firm has exceeded my expectations, especially in terms of the size, which allows the attorneys to do the type of work they want to do." The firm's first managing partner, he added, "One day, we will leave the firm knowing it's in the hands of people here that have the same values of client service and office culture that make it a great place to work. We are well on our way with Robb as the managing partner."

The firm continues to look ahead as it enters its third decade. Gold explains, " 'Staying ahead of the curve' is an expression that describes our practice. We always help our clients prepare for the future, because we stay on top of environmental law and trends.

After all, the environment is our only focus so we track what's happening and we can help our clients in a collaborative way.”

And, Robb Fox speaks to the future knowing the firm will continue to play a key role as the next decade blends into another: “Environmental law will continue to be robust because of our political landscape and enforcement of environmental laws. We are uniquely positioned to handle that work.”

MGKF represents clients ranging from Fortune 100 corporations to small, privately held enterprises, both in the Mid-Atlantic region and on a national basis. MGKF's offices are located at 401 City Avenue, Suite 400, Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, just outside Philadelphia and in Cherry Hill, New Jersey at 535 Route 38, Suite 145A. For additional information, visit [www.mgkflaw.com](http://www.mgkflaw.com) or call 484-430-5700 or 856-317-1299.

###