

CHERYL HALL

Attorney couple lay down law: no shop talk

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join the law firms where they still work.

"We made a rule in law school that we were just not going to talk about law," Carol says. "When you practice law every day, why would you want to come home and talk about it?"

Nighttime chats

Instead, they meet nightly at home — sometimes really late — and talk about other things: charities, friends, family, colleagues, travel, books and life's big questions.

Don tends to be the heavy on meaning-of-life topics. Carol indulges him to a point.

"He started talking about what we would do when we retire when we were in our 20s," she says. "I am only now starting to not give short shrift to the topic — an improvement from rolling my eyes. We also talk about us, but it's in a lot of shorthand."

When one of them goes on a business trip, the other may know where but not why.

"They have the epitome of the Chinese wall," says Billie Ellis, a longtime friend of the Glendennings and a partner at the firm with Don. "I know a lot more about their business than their spouse does."

Carol found out about the big merger that created Locke Lord Bissell & Liddell in 2007 in the newspaper.

She did tell Don she might



KYE R. LEE/Staff Photographer

Carol and Don Glendenning have plenty to talk about, but what's going on at work is never the topic of conversation. Instead, they focus on travel, charity or life's big questions.

become the next chairman at Strasburger before it happened in 2006. "OK, so I was the only nominee," Carol shrugs.

"It wasn't quite ready to be printed in the paper," Don says. "But it was pretty much a done deal."

They each have an idea what the other makes but send tax documents separately to their accountant.

Areas of expertise

Don focuses on wealthy family clients, private equity work and public companies,

including A. H. Belo Corporation, parent of *The Dallas Morning News*. Carol tackles mergers and acquisitions, securities, corporate governance and compliance.

"Carol has a crisper and more immediate analytical mind than I do," Don says. "At its best, the licensed practice of law involves the unlicensed practice of psychology. That's my strength."

He developed those assets by being the "failed alpha male" of the Glendenning family of Celina, Texas.

Don was the eldest of five

children born in less than six years. "We were really a litter," he says, and Don was the runt his parents didn't brag about.

His two brothers were captains of Celina's renowned Fighting Bobcats football team; his two sisters were head cheerleaders. "I played every sport badly," Don says. "And on top of that, I was bookish — a vastly humiliating thing for my family."

One brother-sister pairing went to Texas A&M University and the other to the University of North Texas. Don went to Rice University

for a degree in English and history and then to Stanford.

One longtime friend of his parents didn't know Don existed until he and Carol showed up at a family event. Carol swears Don isn't exaggerating.

He tells the story with humor, saying he loves his "gene pool." But Don admits more solemnly that "being deprived of any path to stroke my budding ego" shaped his very core. "It made me empathetic and, most significantly for my profession, a diplomat."

Carol's family was Midwestern Scandinavian normal. She grew up in rural Minnesota outside Minneapolis, where her father owned an Oldsmobile dealership. Her mother stayed at home with the four children.

Carol was the first in the family to go to college, earning her degree in American studies and political science from St. Olaf College in Minnesota.

Yin and yang

Mary McDermott Cook, a longtime friend, says the Glendennings live life to the fullest, share a bond with community and are best friends. "They are the most giving human beings I've ever met."

Their kitchen is like an oversize closet. Because neither cooks, the only time

the oven is used is by caterers when the Glendennings entertain.

A personal assistant brings in provisions (mostly prepared offerings from Eatzi's and Whole Foods) twice a week. "Don is very good at assembling," says Carol, who says he brings her breakfast in bed every morning.

Other than that, they don't eat in much.

Each attends about 150 to 200 business and charitable functions a year. Often, when they're at the same event, they sit at separate tables.

And at the end of every year, they take a five-star vacation to celebrate their birthdays and anniversary. It is another steadfast rule that neither breaks.

Modern electronics make discretion much easier — especially when they're traveling. The spouse who doesn't need privacy leaves the premises until the other gives the all-clear to return.

But years ago, Don needed to take a stateside call in the middle of the night in London. The only phone was next to the hotel bed. Luckily, the bathroom had a big tub, which Carol turned into a sleeper.

"We stretched towels at the bottom of the door to make sure it was soundproof," Don says.

The call lasted seven hours. He's still doing penance for that one.