



MEET THE PROFESSIONALS:

**How Gelu-Titus Maravela went from being a ship motorman into being a lawyer.
Who boosted him from the “bottom” of a ship to the forefront of a leading law firm¹**

Today’s successful lawyer, Gelu-Titus Maravela, started his career as a...ship motorman, being an employee of the River Administration of the Lower Danube between 1988 and 1990. He worked hard whilst studying at the same time for the admission exam to the Law School within University of Bucharest and in 1991, he was among the firsts to pass the exam. *„And ever since, my life sailed into a whole different direction”*, emphasizes the Managing Partner of Maravela & Asociații.

The professional path of Gelu-Titus Maravela involves extremely interesting episodes, which may be regarded as lessons for those eager to succeed in life. The lawyer in charge with the coordination of a well-known law firm has initially worked on a ship. His first job was that of a ship motorman, job which has no connection whatsoever with the legal field. *„I know, totally unexpected. However, looking back, it does not seem so. Times changed dramatically during the last 25 years. Careers are no exception. In 1991, I passed the admission exam to the Law School within the University of Bucharest among the firsts.”* says Maravela.

Judge with the Court of First Instance, District 1

And this is how it all started. Talking about the beginning of his legal career, Gelu Maravela admits he had a rather atypical path.

¹The Romanian version of the article was published by BizLawyer on www.bizlawyer.ro within “Meet the Professionals” series (<http://www.bizlawyer.ro/stiri/piata-avocaturii/cum-a-schibat-gelu-titus-maravela-meseria-de-motorist-cu-cea-de-avocat-cine-l-a-impins-din-burta-unei-nave-fluviale-pana-in-fruntea-unei-firme-de-top>).

“I didn’t need anybody’s help at the beginning of my career. I remember, with undisguised pleasure, how in the summer of 1995 I attended the public distribution of vacant positions in the Magistracy, which took place in a formal environment in the hall of the Ministry of Justice. The grades I obtained during Law School and my LL.B grade allowed me to opt for a judge position with the Court of First Instance, District 1, Bucharest. This is how my legal career started.” recounts the lawyer.

His desire for knowledge made him accept all challenges he encountered. For this reason his mentoring period was divided into stages. *“My mentoring period overlaps with three important stages of my professional career: the period in which Mrs Valentina Tătuțescu, former president of the Court of First Instance, District 1, Bucharest, taught me the strictness of procedures, the respect for rules, the assumption of decisions and responsibilities, as well as the dignity of opinions; the second period, under the guidance of Mr Dan Sulica, an eminent lawyer and erudite legal professional, when I strengthened my power of expression, acquired the ease of argumentation and fluency in writing; and the last period, under the guidance of Professor Julio Faundez, Warwick University – United Kingdom, where I attended an LL.M between 1999 and 2000, who induced me the inclination towards debate of ideas and concepts, without ignoring my interlocutors or minimizing their stake, who helped me polish my professional competitiveness and tame my dogmatic approach of legal matters.”* points Gelu Maravela.

He wanted to come into prominence

Listening to him while he speaks about his student years, you realize the person you have in front is a personality which has never accepted to remain anonymous. The student Gelu Maravela was continuously driven by the desire to overcome anonymity. This can be deemed as a natural desire for a person who wants to succeed in his profession and who is aware that work can boost him all the way to the top.

“For me, student years were filled with novelty, turmoil, thirst for knowledge, study, overcoming anonymity. Until the 4th year, I had already taken part to several summer schools organized by international universities and organizations, I had published an article “The Law” Magazine (revista “Dreptul”) and I had read dozens of law books written by illustrious French, Italian and Romanian jurists between 1850 and 1950. I especially invite students and not only to discover the work of Ion Tanoviceanu. It fascinated me. My mentoring period was the time I struggled with myself, with my skills and abilities, as well as with my power of understanding and adapting. At the same time, during my mentoring period I tested my patience and consolidated my legal profile. I read a tremendous amount of books, both in Romanian and English, I worked with pleasure and approached every project assigned to me, irrespective of its complexity, with the same level of seriousness. It was the defining period for my professional maturity” explains Gelu Maravela.

Being aware that he can learn by “stealing” information from everyone around, the student Maravela was open to everything that was new, discovering things others had ignored. *“There is no doubt that all the academic professors and assistants I met during the faculty years were contributors to my legal thinking structuring, logic outlining and my basic knowledge*

ordering, inducing at the same time the idea of their correlation. As a legal professional, I can easily state that I am the product of all those who taught me the science of law, one way or another. Among those professors, I am pleased to mention Valeriu Stoica, Mihai Lucian and Gabriel Boroi, all of them highly reputed professors”, the lawyer underlines.

When looking back, Gelu Maravela realizes that, despite some inherent difficulties, his career was beautiful so far.

He is a highly demanding mentor

Gelu Maravela confessed that he is now a mentor in its own, but a “highly demanding one, very fond of quality and the development of certain skills that may ensure a good management of files, clients’ expectations and appearance.”

Asked about how a young professional could become his apprentice, the lawyer explains that he has a different approach of such aspects: “Nobody has to earn a place under my mentorship. All the colleagues I work with within the law firm have the door to my office wide open. The thing is for those working with me to keep up with the strictness, exigency, professionalism and competitiveness I cultivate and require. Those who resist such tests will undoubtedly become competitive players on the legal market, both in our country and abroad. Witness for my statements stand those who were under my mentoring and are now working in Brussels, with the UN or are attending LL.Ms in Great Britain or the United States, not only lawyers and professionals working in our country.

He built up a different kind of firm

He also had a special approach when he decided to start his own business. He took this step in 2012, when he realized he wants something more. “As an equity partner for almost 10 years with one of the largest law firms in our country (Mușat&Asociații editor’s note), I had reached the ultimate level of professional and managerial skills. Starting with 2009, I used to get calls every year from recruitment companies from London and Budapest. My answer was always the same: a foreign company could not offer me what I needed, mainly a law firm according to my aspirations and the ones of my founding partners, Alina Popescu and Marius Pătrășcanu. That different law firm both Alina and Marius wanted as well. Without them, I would have never taken such a step. Now I am able to state, without lacking modesty, that we’ve made it. My grounds? The firm won this year three prestigious international prizes, was ranked by London based legal directories, gained clients’ recognition and consolidated its reputation on the market. And all of these within one year and a half. And there’s so much more to be done!”, Gelu Maravela concludes.