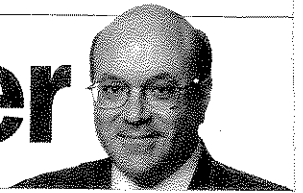


# Robert Feder



Serving up scoops on Chicago media

## Life (and radio) goes on



**LAW PARTNERS** Conti woke up on Valentine's Day to find Adamski, her 62-year-old husband and *Legally Speaking* radio partner, dead from a heart attack.

Even with the hook of being husband-and-wife law partners and verbal sparring partners, Greg Adamski and Karen Conti had a hard time early on selling themselves as a talk-show team.

"No one wants to talk to lawyers because they think lawyers are boring," Conti recalled of their rejections by one radio-station program director after another. "Even to get them to listen to a tape was almost impossible because they thought lawyers are supposed to pay to get on the air. But that was not something we were ever interested in doing—out of principle."

Five years as cohosts of *Legally Speaking* on news/talk WGN-AM (720) proved Adamski and Conti to be anything but boring, winning them a big following among Chicago radio listeners and the respect of media and legal peers alike. The show features a lively mix of local and national news about high-profile court cases; interviews with top lawyers, judges and journalists; and questions from listeners on legal matters.

Now Conti faces the challenge of carrying on without her Sunday night costar. "I'm moving ahead," she told me last week. "I'm doing exactly what Greg would have wanted me to do, which is to move ahead with my life and continue to do the show."

Just hours after their last *Legally Speaking* show aired on February 13, Adamski suffered a heart attack in his sleep. When Conti woke up on Valentine's Day, her 62-year-old

husband and partner was dead. The passing of the prominent civil and criminal defense attorney and adjunct professor at the University of Illinois College of Law elicited an outpouring of grief—including messages from hundreds of WGN listeners who knew him only through the weekly radio show.

"Greg and Karen were such a great team in the field of law, on the air and as husband and wife," said Tom Langmyer, vice president and general manager of the Tribune Co.-owned station. "I've been talking with Karen about her future here, and she knows she's part of the WGN family."

Conti plans to return on Sunday 6—although the format of the show is still under discussion. "They couldn't have been nicer or more warm and encouraging," Conti said of WGN management. "They told me, 'Of course we want you to keep going with the show.' But it's not going to be the same one. I think we might try having a partner du jour, maybe a lawyer of the day, or maybe one of the personalities from WGN accompany me. Or maybe I'll just morph into having the show by myself. We haven't figured it out yet."


What she knows for sure is that Adamski would approve. "Greg talked a lot about death," she said. "I don't know if that's a dark Irish thing or maybe just because he was a few years older than me—14 years older—there was always the thought that he was going to go first. He said he'd never do

the show without me just because he wouldn't want to—not that he couldn't, just that he wouldn't want to. But he always said he would want me to do the show."

Long before they became Sunday night fixtures on WGN, Adamski and Conti knew their way around a radio studio almost as well as they did around a courtroom. For four years in the mid-'90s, they hosted *Chicago Law* on the former WJJD. But when that station switched formats, securing a new venue wasn't easy.

Conti credits former WGN personality Steve Cochran with opening the door for them at the 50,000-watt powerhouse. "We'd tried to get in all over but kind of gave up. We said, 'No one's listening to us, no one even cares that we did a show and we won all these [Achievement in Radio] awards.' It wasn't until Cochran got us on WGN that the station listened. Steve kept saying, 'These guys are great,' and he kept having us on his show." On his Facebook page the day after Adamski died, Cochran wrote: "Great lawyer, better man."

A memorial service, billed as "A Celebration of the Life of Greg Adamski," will be held Thursday 3 from 5:30 to 7:30pm at the Union League Club (65 W Jackson Blvd, 312-427-7800).

 Add your voice to the conversation at media critic Robert Feder's blog, [timeoutchicago.com/feder](http://timeoutchicago.com/feder).