

What I Wish I Knew Then: Tom Modly

In "What I Wish I Knew Then: Tom Modly" (New York Law Journal, July 22, 2025) Tom Modly, the Acting Secretary of the Navy during Donald Trump's first administration discusses leadership, tough decisions, and lessons learned with Pollock Cohen partner Steve Cohen.

When asked about how a career may test your values, he said, "You have to know your moral and ethical foundation, because you will run headlong into ethical issues in every job." For him, the anchor of leadership is character. "You have to know what foundation you're going to build your career on. What traits matter most to you? What principles will you never compromise?"

He urged young leaders to answer those questions early and test themselves often. "Every job will bring you face-to-face with an ethical issue, a leadership dilemma, maybe not a moral crisis, but something that forces you back to your foundation. That's why it's critical to understand it, refine it, and hold to it."

To read the full article, click on the link below.

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