



Published on 28 September 2021 by **Jean-Luc Soulier**, Member of the Paris Bar

jl.soulier@soulier-avocats.com

Tel.: +33 (0)1 40 54 29 29, + 33 (0)4 72 82 20 80

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Jean-Luc Soulier: "My father has a flame for life, I inherited it"

In this article published in *Le Progrès* in early September, <u>Jean-Luc Soulier</u> evokes his roots and recalls the history that shaped Soulier Avocats.

This article is reproduced below and a courtesy English translation follows.



Jean-Luc Soulier: "My father has a flame for life, I inherited it."



After studying in the United States and practicing in New York, Jean-Luc Soulier, an international lawyer and the eldest son of the famous lawyer André Soulier, practices at the Paris and Brussels Bars. Managing partner of Soulier Avocats, the only French law firm that is part of the World Law Group, which includes 60 firms covering the entire world, he talks about his relationship with his father.

Did your father, in a way, shape your identity?

There is of course a sort of imprint that results from my upbringing and I have learned a number of lessons from him. He always had a great open mind, a desire to understand, a refusal of hasty judgments, of sectarianism, of ideologies, always giving primacy to Man. As such, he taught me not to lock myself in preconceived notions and ideas. I have the feeling that I have the same fierce will to never give in to anything but always while respecting others, it is in our DNA. The complexity of human beings interests us.

How do you feel about his fame?

Great pride. Coming from a very modest background, my father never denied his origins and has always looked beyond the smoke and mirrors. My grandfather Paul was a goods porter before becoming a grocer and then a cab driver, and my grandmother Mariette, as a young girl, was a maid. They were authentic, intelligent and empathetic people. I owe them part of my education because my father was only 22 when I was born. He was still in school, financed by my mother, a typist at Berliet. So, I was a witness to his life path.

Do you seek his approval?

Every son hopes to have his father's approval, but that does not govern my choices. Everyone is responsible for their own destiny. He is himself a totally free man, nothing hinders him. We both have a profession of words but I have not tried to be his clone.

What happy memories did you share?

Our fierce tennis games. He passed on to me a taste for sport, for challenge, for combat.

Do you feel you have a duty to preserve his memory?

I want to perpetuate this family chain which is exceptional because of its origins, I want to pass on to my children the values that my father inherited and of which he proved himself worthy. He had to rise up and for that, he had to seek the light. I built myself in a different way, through my work as an international lawyer. And I never wanted to be a public figure like him. He would have liked me to get involved in politics. I was not tempted. I even went against the grain.

What would you like to tell him that you have never told him?

There is great modesty and reserve between us. Everything I just told you I never told him."



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