

# My favorite lawyer & home schooled children

I've noticed that quite a few New Hampshire mothers home school their children. Maybe fathers do too, but I haven't met any.

In April of 2000, I was asked to represent the Judiciary Committee of the New Hampshire legislature in what has become known as the Supreme Court "impeachment case." I spent the next six months carrying out that assignment, first conducting an investigation and then, following impeachment of the chief justice, serving as prosecutor at the State Senate impeachment trial. It was an honor to be part of something so important for this state, where I was born and raised.

The job came with perks — I had a reserved parking space and my very own fax machine. I stayed at the Holiday Inn, ate

countless lunches at the State House cafeteria, and found out where you could get a late night meal in Concord. I met interesting people, including former judges, former wives of former judges, disgruntled litigants, legislators and reporters.

And I met citizens, including a woman who was home schooling her children. Late one afternoon she came up to me in the corridor outside the hearing room where the trial was being held. She introduced herself. "I'm home schooling my three children. I brought them here today to see how our government works. Would you be willing to speak with them?" I said "Of course" and spoke with the two girls and the oldest child, a boy of 14. He shook my hand, and paid me the ultimate compliment: "I've been watching you on television, and you're my favorite lawyer."

"You've made my day," I told him.

A few days later it came time for closing arguments. I spoke for two hours, reserving one hour for rebuttal. Counsel for the chief justice then spoke for three hours. As is typical for lawyers, neither of us had enough time.

Every good closing has a theme, and his was, "I don't think so." He used those words to refute every argument I had made for our side of the case. It was a virtual mantra, repeated over and over to the point where you could see 22 New Hampshire state senators practically mouthing those words for him. I squirmed each time I heard them.

As his three hours wound down, he told about meeting a mother and her home-schooled children a few days earlier. It sounded familiar. He

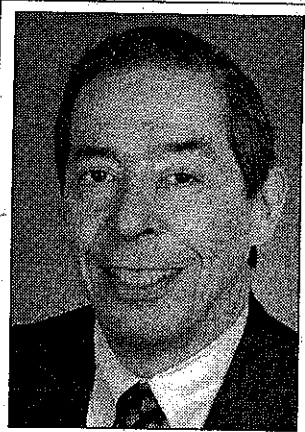
ended his remarks with a rhetorical flourish, asking the senators to send a message to those children that democracy works in New Hampshire. He sat down, and I got up.

I thought for a moment, and then I told of my meeting with the same family and the son's supreme compliment — "You're my favorite lawyer." That got a laugh. Not to be outdone, and even though his time had expired, my worthy opponent jumped up and said, "The older daughter said the same thing to me!" That got a laugh too.

I looked at him, then at the senators, then back at him and resumed my rebuttal with his four words:

"I don't think so."

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