

## STATEMENT TO THE GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL

Thank you, Councilor Albano, for your introduction. I would like to thank Governor Patrick for the trust and confidence he has shown in me by nominating me to the position of Associate Justice of the Chicopee District Court. I am humbled and thankful for the supporters that have come with me to these Honorable Chambers and I am truly appreciative of the opportunity to appear before you so that you may get to know me better.

First off, I need to be clear that despite what you have heard about me, I am not the smartest nor am I the best lawyer in my law firm. I am not even the smartest or the best lawyer in my family. That title goes to Cheryl Parker, my law partner for the last 30 or so years and, more importantly, my wife for the last 32+ years. She is wiser than I am and she is not only my law partner and my wife but my friend and I would not be here today without her.

-Let me tell you a bit about my life experience so that you really know who is sitting before you. I grew up in West Springfield, went to Immaculate Conception Grammar School, attended Cathedral High School in Springfield, and went on to Boston College and eventually to Western New England Law School. My father never went beyond 8<sup>th</sup> grade, my mother never went beyond high school but they had a fierce belief in education and raised four children who are now attorneys. My sister Nancy was a registered nurse for years before putting herself through law school. My sister Colleen worked as a parochial grammar school teacher before putting herself through law school and my brother Tom was a police officer for years before putting himself through law school. I took the easy way and went directly from college to law school.

I started my first job on my 16<sup>th</sup> birthday as a stock boy in the shoe department and later as a shoe salesman in the old Sears and Roebuck in West Springfield. During my years at Boston College and later at law school, besides work study, I worked as a bartender at Power's Café in West Springfield and during the summer worked construction for Welch Construction Company and also worked on a construction crew at the old Providence Hospital in Holyoke. I spent time working as a law clerk for the Department of the Army at Fort Meade, Maryland and eventually began working as a law clerk at the old firm of Cohen, Rosenthal and Price, where I was hired as an associate upon my graduation for law school. There I was given an opportunity to work with two wonderful lawyers, but more important, wonderful human beings: Shelly Rosenthal and Mike Jennings. They gave me the opportunity to embark on a career in litigation from which I never looked back.

During the last 34 years, I have been litigating and trying hundreds of both civil and criminal cases in virtually every District and Superior Court in Western Mass, and in many other Counties throughout the Commonwealth. I have tried numerous civil and cases in Federal Court and served as a Criminal Justice Act Attorney representing indigent clients in Federal Court for over 20 years. I have represented clients in Federal District Court for the District of Columbia and in matters relating to proceedings in Federal District Court for the Southern District of New York. I have tried complex civil actions in Superior Court for both the City of Chicopee since 1986, where I am the Chief of Litigation, and for the City of Westfield where I have served as Associate City Solicitor since 2009. I have also served as a Special Prosecutor for the Northwestern District Attorney when that office needed outside counsel because of a conflict of interest. All the while, I have maintained a busy private practice with my wife and law partner, Cheryl Parker, since 1985. In my criminal practice, I have represented clients charged

with virtually every category of crime, including bank robbery, vehicular homicide, rape and other sexual assault, armed robbery, OUI, white collar crime, misdemeanor traffic offences. I have represented individuals countless times in 209A proceedings and represented individuals often with respect to issues involving the denial of or forfeiture of permits to own or carry firearms. In short, I have spent my entire career in the courtroom.

But my first experience with the court system goes back to well before that. My first memory of a courthouse was when I was 8 or 9 years old. I had gone to the old Springfield District Court with my father. He would be celebrating his birthday today, but he died while I was at Boston College.

I remember vividly walking into the courthouse with him. In retrospect it was either a small claims action or some type of landlord/tenant action. I remember the wooden benches and the crowd of people. I don't remember whether he won or lost. As I sit here, I'm not sure it matters. But what I do remember today is the demeanor of the Judge. He treated my father and all who were before him that day with dignity and respect and we left the courthouse with my father telling me that he had a fair hearing. That is a scene that has stayed with me. I sit before you today and I see the District Court as one of the portals where government interacts with its citizens.

I have appeared enough in the courts of this Commonwealth to understand that virtually every decision a District Court Judge makes has a profound impact on many lives. That impact extends much further than the individual standing before the court. Each and every decision made, and there are many, many decisions made daily by a District Court Judge, must be made with an acute appreciation of the impact of each of those decisions. Each of those decisions must

be made with a sense of fairness, and while treating all the individuals that come before the court with dignity and respect.

I thank you for your time, I look forward to your questions, if any, and I hope that you vote to confirm me as Associate Justice of the Chicopee District Court.

I:/B-CB/WJO/2013 Judicial Application/Statement to the Governor's Council