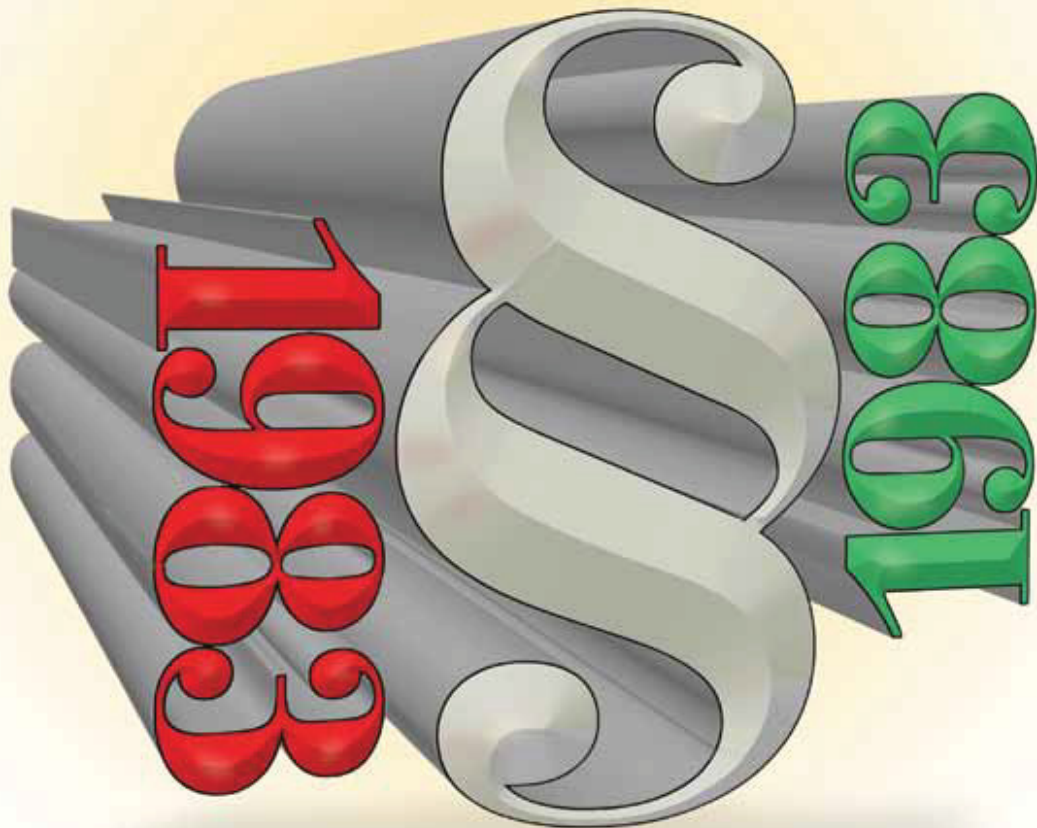


MAINE BAR JOURNAL

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Bar of New Brunswick
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Stephen J. Schuman
March 7, 2011

The University of Maine
Bar of New Brunswick
Honorary Member Award
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Beyond The Law: Stephen Schwartz

Interview and photos
by Daniel J. Murphy

Howard Cosell, the acclaimed broadcaster, once remarked, “Sports is human life in microcosm.” Certainly included within this description are the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat. However, some of the more subtle attributes of sports also should not be overlooked. In addition to its enduring entertainment value, sporting events also serve as a kind of cultural currency that allows people of all generations to connect and share. Stephen Schwartz brings this notion to life. Faithfully providing commentary on local public access television, Schwartz’s interest in broadcasting originated from his time as a spectator of the games of his children. Aiming to capture local sporting events for posterity, he also has been able to create an outlet for showcasing local talent, while entertaining viewers with his capable play-by-play commentary. Schwartz, who otherwise maintains a law practice at Schwartz & Schwartz, P.A. in Portland, sat down with the *Maine Bar Journal* to discuss his interest.

MBJ: Please tell our readers about your interest in broadcasting youth sports events.

SS: I was a double major at University of Maine in Political Science and Broadcasting. I did some broadcasting for a news station up at Orono and acted as a stringer periodically for another station, such as on a boxing match. So the interest has been there for some time. However, my work with youth sports started when I was going to my kids’ games. Parents of older kids would tape the games and Channel 3, WPPS, would play the games on public access television. WPPS is Portland Public Schools TV 3. When I started doing youth games, I was kind of bit by the broadcasting bug all over again. If I was going to be there watching my kids’ games, I figured I might as well broadcast those and provide color, as well. It since has led to doing games where my kids are not involved, such

as basketball tournaments for Deering or Portland High School, or baseball or field hockey games.

MBJ: As a child, did you have a strong interest in sports?

SS: Yes. My kids are all better athletes than I ever was. I was basically a JV athlete in baseball and soccer. I also studied the game of baseball a bit when I was the manager of the varsity team at Deering High School. It just became a matter of interest. On the broadcasting end, I used to play these board hockey games and my brother Michael would

serve as the announcer. He would tape the games and he was really, really good at play-by-play. That's probably one of the ways that I learned how to broadcast.

MBJ: Are there any particular broadcasters that you admire or enjoy listening to?

SS: I really like them all. I think Jim Nance and Dick Enberg have nice styles. Al Michaels is terrific. I used to like John Madden and Johnny Most. Marv Albert does a great job; he has a very distinct, recognizable voice that you hear all the time. One night he is

doing football, and then the next night, he is doing basketball. Every broadcaster has his own style. You just try to do as professional a job as you can.

MBJ: What are some of the qualities of a great broadcaster?

SS: Well, I'm not sure I would know them! I can tell you what I like to see: somebody with knowledge of the game and a generally pleasing voice. It should be somebody who is willing to learn the names of the players and give them proper recognition. I think that's what goes into being a good broadcaster.





MBJ: What are some of the challenges of broadcasting?

SS: It is similar to the challenges of being a lawyer: preparation. I met Dick Enberg's son when he was here a couple years ago. I asked him what it was like growing up with Dick, and he said, "You know, my dad was not around a lot because he was preparing for games." From Tuesday through Saturday, he got a prodigious amount of information from the networks. A lot of work goes into preparation. Enberg's son also added that he got to spend time on the sidelines at Super Bowls, so it was a trade-off.

For local games, at least an hour before a game, I'll go online and get all the statistics on the players. I highlight the data and write an introduction. We talk about the players throughout the

game and I try to recall what they've been doing. We also read the summaries of the previous games. For example, maybe a player scored 40 points in a game earlier that year.

MBJ: What are the things that bring you joy about your pastime?

SS: Well, I love sports and, of course, I love to watch my kids play sports. I also enjoy watching other students play sports. So I'm there at the games anyway, and I just think our efforts are both for posterity and to showcase the kids and the schools. It is a chance to talk about and focus on student athletes. Sometimes, we have anecdotes and little vignettes about them that we know because we have watched them grow up. I remember there was a kid that I had coached in Little League who was a pretty good player on the

Deering basketball team. It was nice to reminisce a little bit about his wicked fastball with movement, when he was a twelve-year-old in Little League. For me, it is a great hobby. If it is true that we have mid-life crises, mine has taken the form of broadcasting and umpiring.

MBJ: What's the best advice that you've ever received?

SS: Well, the best advice I've ever received was probably from my first boss, Mary Tousignant, who was the District Attorney in York County. Her advice was simply to "Listen." Whether you are meeting with clients, preparing for a trial, speaking with witnesses, or especially in trial, you really have to pay attention. The more you listen, the more you gain.

But aside from this, the greatest influence on me as an attorney was my father, Jack Schwartz, who practiced law in Portland from 1952 until he took ill in 1995. He was a general practitioner who consumed the law voraciously and just could not wait to pick up the next file. If I wanted to celebrate a victory, he might say, "Take a minute, but just quickly move on to the next file and help somebody else." He was just a wonderful man who treated other lawyers with kindness and respect. I don't think kindness needs to be mistaken for weakness. In fact, other lawyers in Maine's legal community still tell me stories about my father helping them when they were young lawyers. I think that's something that all lawyers should be willing to do.



Daniel J. Murphy is a shareholder in Bernstein Shur's Litigation Practice Group, where his practice concentrates on commercial and business litigation matters.

Beyond the Law features conversations with Maine lawyers who pursue unique interests or pastimes. Readers are invited to suggest candidates for *Beyond the Law* by contacting Dan Murphy at dmurphy@bernsteinshur.com.



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