

Mentor as...Both Protégé and Mentor

By Hon. Charles R. Hayes, Senior Master

As a young lawyer and later as judge on the Municipal and Superior Courts, Dick Huffman was a trusted friend and mentor whose advice I could always rely upon. Dick is one of the smartest people I have ever encountered whose integrity is beyond question. Many years ago I remember asking him a question that had been bothering me regarding legal ethics. His response was simple. If you have to ask the question you likely already know the answer.

While Bill Yale, Peter Hughes and Frank Orfield informally provided me invaluable advice and counsel during my career, after being appointed to the Municipal Court, I learned the court had a formalized approach to mentoring new judges. In accord with their practice, the presiding judge formally designated Wayne Peterson to serve as my mentor judge to assist in the transition from a lawyer advocating a position to that of an impartial trial judge. Not a small task indeed and I think Wayne did a yeoman's job. Ironically, twenty four years later, following my retirement from the bench, Wayne is once again serving as mentor upon my becoming a mediator in the same firm in which he practices.

Finally, many years ago a dear friend was employed as a clerk in the produce department of a large grocery store. He felt he was at a dead end. Over a long period of time I encouraged him to go to law school. He finally did and it wasn't easy for him. He was married and had been out of school for some time. Fast forward twenty years. He is a successful and respected lawyer, still married to the same wonderful woman. I like to think I played some small part in his success.