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Newsmakers

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BRIEFS

NEWSMAKERS

Bruce A. Goldstein Cited for His Work Helping the Disabled

Bruce A. Goldstein, an attorney and adjunct professor in the Law School, was named a Citizen of the Year for 1989 by The Buffalo News. He was cited for his work as "a champion of the disabled and downtrodden."

Goldstein has taught a course on the legal rights of people with disabilities for the past four years. He also works closely with the Law School's clinical education program.

For the last eight years, Goldstein has spent much of his time in litigation on the rights of the mentally retarded, physically disabled and otherwise handicapped people. Much of his work has been on a pro bono or reduced rate basis.

"He's an advocate for family and children who very rarely have advocates," says one admirer.

He has represented the interests of handicapped students in lawsuits against the Buffalo and Lackawanna school systems. Last year, he represented more than 200 special education students in



Bruce A. Goldstein

Lackawanna, youths who have suffered adverse reactions from DPT (diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus) shots and a community group that won its fight to start a new school for autistic children.

Goldstein's usual clients are far from influential or well-connected. They have included a mentally retarded man locked in a closet for years, and a retarded couple in Niagara Falls fighting to keep custody of their baby.

In addition to his local efforts, Goldstein has achieved prominence at the state and national levels. He is writing a book on "Legal Rights of Persons With Disabilities" and tries to interest his students in pursuing this field.

Goldstein originally wanted to do legal work in civil liberties and civil rights. But after the birth of his daughters, who are hearing impaired, he "started looking into the law as it related to them" and his interest and emphasis shifted.

He says, "I feel that I'm able to provide a needed service for people that unfortunately don't have many places they can go for help." ■

Leslie G. Foschio '65 Is Appointed U.S. Magistrate

Leslie G. Foschio '65, a Buffalo attorney, business executive and veteran government and political figure, was named to the post of magistrate in U.S. District Court. He is expected to begin his new duties Jan. 1.

Foschio, 49, will be one step below a federal judge, presiding over a wide range of civil and criminal matters in a

newly created position in the Buffalo Courthouse. He was appointed for an eight-year term.

He has been chief counsel to Barrister Information Systems Corp. since 1983. He was named a vice president of the computer systems firm in 1985. Before that, he ran unsuccessfully for the Democratic nomination for mayor of Buffalo in 1977. He also served as New York State's commissioner of motor vehicles from 1981 until 1983.

He is a former president of the UB Law Alumni Association. ■

Jeffrey A. Rabin '70 Wins Landmark Murder Case

Jeffrey A. Rabin '70, of Brooklyn, won a landmark murder case that may help establish post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a legal defense for violent acts. In 50 previous criminal cases involving Vietnam veterans, the PTSD defense was effective only three times. This was the first time PTSD was used successfully as a murder defense in New York State.

As a result of Rabin's successful defense of veteran Reuben Pratts, he appeared on the CBS network program "Nightwatch" and on two New York City TV programs.

Here's how the New York Daily News described the case:

"On Feb. 21, 1988, Pratts pulled the trigger and killed a man. Was he in Brooklyn or Vietnam?"

"A New York State Supreme Court jury ruled that Pratts, 41, was in the throes of a violent flashback and mentally in Vietnam at the time he killed Julio Torres, 24.

"The jury said he was not responsible because of mental disease or defect. Instead of facing 15 years to life, he will probably be free after a month-long psychiatric evaluation with the stipulation he continue treatment for PTSD."

Says Rabin, "The impact will have far greater consequences on Vietnam veterans than on Reuben Pratts himself, because it basically brings PTSD into the forefront again and hopefully establishes that it's for real.

"We've known that it has been there for 10 years, but many individuals find it hard to believe that people can flashback. This proves it can happen and should send out a helping message." ■