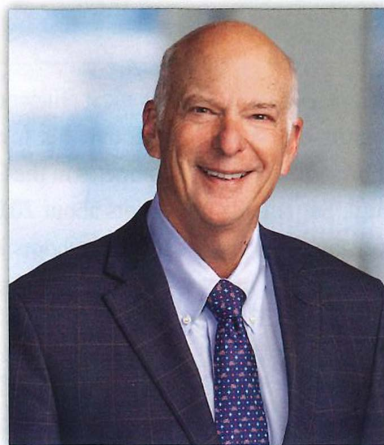


A Profile

IN PROFESSIONALISM



DICK SCHWARTZ

Shareholder, Munsch Hardt Kopf & Harr, P.C.
Executive Director, The Garland R. Walker Inn of Court

We all have key events in our life that shape who we are. Serving as a briefing attorney for U.S. District Judge Hugh Gibson in the Galveston Division for the Southern District of Texas between 1979 and 1981 was certainly one of mine.

That was not my first time in that court. In 1969, Ball High School kicked me out for having long hair. It wasn't that long, particularly by today's standards. My dad, who was then-state senator for District 17, including Galveston, asked me if I wanted to fight it. He said, if I did, we had to do it the right way. That meant first seeking relief from the school board. We did and lost.

Then, my father filed suit in federal court in Galveston, as my next of friend. We lost. After an evidentiary hearing, the court dismissed the case for failure to exhaust administrative remedies. We did not appeal, but the Fifth Circuit, in another case, commented that the ruling in my case was "estopped by one hundred years of litigation under 1983."

So, I cut my hair and started an "underground" newspaper, which my mother and father helped me write and publish by using the mimeograph machine at our temple. All this caused my dad to receive hate mail, which I still have. Yet, through it all, he treated everyone with respect and dignity. And he never lost faith in the system.

This taught me more than I appreciated at the time—that civility matters. I was disappointed, of course, with the result in my case, but it led to me serving as a briefing attorney for an outstanding judge in that very court and to respect the system and people in it, even when I disagreed with the result. 