

Lewandoski Bailiff and Court Administrator of the Medina County Domestic Relations Court, by Kate Feeks, Courthouse Reporter for CZ Court Reporter at www.czcourtreporter.com



Joe Lewandoski

As I entered the office of Joe Lewandoski Court Administrator, Bailiff for Judge Mary Kovack of the Medina County Court of Common Pleas Domestic Relations Division, the first thing I noticed was a picture sitting on a shelf

that read "Joe said it would". I had no idea what that meant but it caught my eye. By the time I left the Medina County Domestic Relations Court, I knew what the words on the picture meant.

Joe grew up in Pennsylvania, his father was a coal miner and his mother was a homemaker, taking care of Joe and his older sister. In 1968, Joe came to Ohio where he entered the Cleveland Police Academy.

In 1969, Joe began a 26 year career with the Cleveland Police Department. During these years he spent eight on the road in his "black and whites" as a police officer and the other eighteen as a member of the detective bureau. Interestingly, it was his experience working in the detective bureau that greatly prepared him for the work that he does today for the public.

Joe explained he was placed in different police units: plain cloths unit, gang unit, vice unit and labor relations unit. Each specialized unit operates to address the various needs of a diverse community. Police officers deal with all aspects of the law and have to learn the different traits of specific groups that make up the public. After you have been an officer for so long you begin to handle situations on instinct. He says "you begin to read people and you don't even know that you are doing it". It was through these twenty six years of experience dealing with the public that I believe prepared him to be the "all business" kind of man he is today.

When not working in the DR court, Joe engages in his favorite pastime – fishing. "It is the best stress reliever for this job" explains Joe. His search for peace and quiet has led him all over the country from Minnesota to Florida to New York to Alaska. His prize fish was a sixty eight pound Halibut caught in Homer, Alaska on a week long trip he took with his wife of twenty five years.

As Bailiff, Joe provides security in the courtroom. When he arrives to work he ensures the courtrooms are safe, free of hidden bombs, guns or any other dangers. Bailiffs declare the entry of judges in courtrooms as well as announce courtroom rules and implement those rules. Bailiffs may remove or apprehend uncooperative people and can call the sheriff's office for assistance with those attending a trial that may exhibit hostile behavior.

The job of the court administrator is focused on the function of the court. "Keep the Judge happy" responds Joe while explaining in detail the daily operations of the court. When asked what are some of the things you like or dislike about your job Joe responded "this job is very interesting because you are dealing with the public. "The hard part about it is the ridiculous excuses people can come up with to avoid doing exactly what the court has ordered them to do". "Its pretty black and white up here – you either do what the court order says or you pay the consequences".

As I exited the interview with Joe, I looked back and noticed that picture again. Anyone who has had the opportunity to meet Joe may realize he is a man of few words. But it seems Joe is someone who bases his life and career on fact. It is this "cut to the chase" demeanor that allows Joe to be great at what he does. Therefore, when I reread that statement in the picture "Joe said it would" it occurred to me that just upon meeting him I believe him. If he tells you something, you believe him and if he gives you his word, he keeps it.

According to Judge Mary Kovack when asked what it is like to work with Joe, she explains, "Joe is a great asset to the court as administrator. He is very much a 'keep your nose to the grind stone' type of person. He doesn't quit until he gets the job done."