

## What makes a person a good judge?

Many mouths dropped a foot when President George Bush nominated his friend and White House counsel Harriet Meirs to be a Supreme Court justice.

His nomination of Meirs to replace retiring judge Sandra Day O'Connor does preserve the gender balance on the court, but without any judicial background Meirs may be the first outsider to be nominated to the highest court of the land.

Meirs is a corporate lawyer, and a longtime loyal friend of Bush, which makes many conservatives feel she will decide cases along the same ideological lines as President Bush would, supposing he could appoint himself to the high court.

Her unknown quantity with no judicial background gives rise to wild speculation about how she will address complex cases, and many groups are nervous because of that uncertainty.

We have no illusions that Meirs is anything but a person with true conservative leanings. That is a given, but what is interesting is that she would be the first justice who would not have a lot of legal baggage tied up in previous rulings from the bench.

To many, there is a sense the legal system is a bit inbred, with the assumption that anyone who is a judge must first be a lawyer. Having a fresh look at the judicial decisions by someone who has not made hundreds before could be a good thing both for the court and for the entire system.

Meirs is being touted by the Focus on the Family people as the kind of justice who would rule against abortion, and they are happy with that idea. No one has heard from the lady herself about her views on the issue, and after the recent confirmation of Chief Justice John Roberts without getting many answers, there is little expectation we will learn a lot during her confirmation before the Senate.

Unless something of a big bomb appears before the hearings, there is every likelihood she will be the new woman on the Supreme Court.

No matter how it goes, there is little doubt the conservatives feel they have been somewhat betrayed because Bush has not nominated someone who they can brand with their litmus test on abortion rights.

The position of associate justice is a tough responsibility, and one that takes as much common sense as it takes legal understanding of the intent of the Constitution and the Founding Fathers.

We will watch as the interest groups pull at Meirs to try to tie her to a specific position, especially on abortion. What we want is to know if she has the ability to use her legal training and experiences plus common sense in forming decisions on the many cases that reach the highest court.

The court has been under fire, and Meirs will be a new breath of air in the middle of the musty air of the judicial club of judges.

— Tom Betz

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## Ah, to be treated like a queen...

Jim and I are having a totally new experience. Until this weekend, I never knew what it felt like to be royalty. Now, I do.

Good minister friends of ours invited Jim to come to Syracuse to present a discussion of the Restoration movement in this country. He spoke Sunday morning, Sunday night, and will speak again Monday and Tuesday nights. I'm along as his support team.

If ever a congregation filled the description of hospitable, it is the First Christian Church of Syracuse. From the moment we arrived in town, we were made to feel welcome. The couple hosting us in their home have given attention to every detail to make us comfortable. We have complete privacy in their upstairs, with our own bath and a beautifully appointed room.

Arlene is a quilter and her home reflects her warm heart as well as her handiwork. Her husband, Bob, is a self-described "gearhead." They work together in his

### Out Back Carolyn Plotts



auto repair business. Jim drooled as he toured Bob's state-of-the-art garage.

Our every need has been anticipated and families have signed up to have us for lunch and dinner every day of our stay. Some are meeting us for lunch at the church, others are taking us out to eat. There are some great Mexican restaurants and I understand we will be sampling a couple.

It is very humbling for us. We know we're just common, everyday folk. But, for right now, in this place, Jim is the out-of-town expert.

—ob—

Our 6-year-old granddaughter, Taylor, called the other morning. She sounded so grown up, I didn't recognize her voice.

"Grandma, guess what? I scored two goals this morning."

Taylor plays in a soccer league but doesn't let the fact that she is the shortest on the team slow her down.

"Yeah," she said, "scored half the points on our team, and we won."

—ob—

It's hard to believe Taylor will soon be 7. All our grandkids are getting older.

Alexandria is almost 11, Chantelle is 12 and Angelia is 15.

Where is the time going? We used to look way ahead to the day Jim would "retire." That day is coming in March and now it doesn't seem so far away. We know he will never entirely quit working, but maybe he can slow down and do some of the things he's been putting off.

Our problem is, we'll never live long enough to get them all done.

## Good help isn't hard to find here

Our recent move has enlightened me as to the meaning of customer service and pride in one's profession.

Frequently the jobs needing completed during a move are those which one calls upon very infrequently. Movers, roofers, woodcrafters are not people you turn to daily for assistance.

Although I knew Ed Lawrence, and his reputation for fine craftsmanship, I had never called upon him. So, when I turned to him for help during this small remodeling job, I was relying on others' opinions.

In today's world of fast food and quick solutions, I was unsure as to the ability to have fine craftsmanship in a timely fashion. I needn't have worried.

The love of one's profession and pride in one's accomplishments is critical to woodcrafters and Ed and his co-worker, Gary Erlenbusch, definitely reflect this.

If you wonder about the difference between a woodworker and a woodcrafter, come to my home. It is the finishing touches, the fine tuning of their craft which places him not in the field of construction, but of craftsmen.

Customer service is greatly desired at

### Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



all times: when you are living in chaos it is critical. Every delay and distraction is emotional and mind boggling.

When faced with needing to find someone to replace our roof, Greg Overlease's name kept surfacing as the person to call. I called on Wednesday and within 10 days he had examined our roof, given me an estimate, shown me the available shingles, removed the old ones and replaced them with new ones. All the while cleaning up each evening and at the end of the job you would never know he had been here unless you looked at the roof. He worked long hours as did his workers.

I only know the name of one of our roofers, but I want to mention him as he was one of the roofers also.

We often hear how young people don't know how to work anymore. Well, I can attest to the stamina of one young man in

our community. John Sanders carried boxes and furniture from one house to another for us. We weren't greatly prepared for this move and so it added great strain on the movers, but he rallied to the need. He was pleasant to have around and worked diligently both moving us and on our roof.

Customer service, dedication to one's profession were priceless to us, but even more than that is the dedication and devotion of friends.

We appreciate the meals, the goodies and the extra pairs of hands, but without one extra pair, this move would never have happened.

Our former next door neighbor, Deb Terrell, packed dishes, carried boxes, gave instructions to movers and did whatever needed doing. Thank you, Deb.

We have moved many times in our 40 years of marriage. We've moved cross country and next door and each time we learn something about ourselves, our neighborhood and our community.

What we've learned from this move is owning a business and taking pride in it are two different things, but without the pride, the ownership will be short-lived.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

### The Eagles support America and the Pledge of Allegiance

To the Editor:  
On behalf of the Fraternal Order of Eagles' 1.1 million members, I'm speaking out against atheist Michael Newdow's challenge to our nation's Pledge of Allegiance and am encouraging all Americans to stand together on this issue.

Newdow seeks to exclude the words "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance, despite the U.S. Supreme Court's numerous rulings that such an official acknowledgment of our nation's religious heritage, foundation and character is constitutional.

The Pledge should be left as it was intended, as an honor to our flag and coun-

try. For more than 60 years the Fraternal Order of Eagles has donated hundreds of Ten Commandment monuments to communities across the U.S., each dedicated with the Pledge of Allegiance. The Supreme Court recently overturned a lower court's ruling, which would have prohibited the display of one of the monuments at the Texas State Capitol. This ruling was a victory for common sense and the principles and ideals upon which the United States of American and the Fraternal Order of Eagles were founded. We anticipate a similar decision concerning the Pledge of Allegiance with the help of the American people.

There's an old saying that if you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything. The Fraternal Order of Eagles is standing up for our Pledge of Allegiance and we ask that like-minded citizens join us in standing together for America.

To sign a petition to stand up for the Pledge, go to [www.FOE.com](http://www.FOE.com).

- Chris Lainas, Grand Worthy President
- Dennis Gilhousen, Norton President
- Bill Nelson, Norton Secretary
- Fraternal Order of Eagles