

EVERYONE'S CHIEF—A TRIBUTE TO CHIEF JUDGE
JONATHAN LIPPMAN

*Patrick A. Woods**

I distinctly remember doing a double take the first time that I saw Chief Judge Lippman in person. It was at the *Albany Law Review's* State Constitutional Commentary Symposium on Wrongful Convictions during my first year of law school.¹ Being used to strictly academic symposia—where for the most part the speakers are those who have written extensively, using unnecessarily large words, about a topic with which they have little to no real world experience—I had decided to attend the event, but with low expectations and having paid absolutely no attention to the identities of the scheduled panel members. Imagine my shock upon entering the lecture hall, being handed a brochure, sitting down, and only then noticing the Chief Judge of the State of New York sitting dead center in the middle of a crescent-shaped table at the front of the room, flanked by the newly elected Manhattan District Attorney. I checked my program. Twice. Later, in the understandably crowded reception following the event, Chief Judge Lippman patiently and thoroughly answered a question of mine that he had not had time to get to during the event itself.

Chief Judge Lippman is enormously accomplished and mind-bogglingly busy. Aside from currently being the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals and Chief Administrator of one of the largest and most influential court systems in the world, he was the longest serving Chief Administrative Judge in the history of New York State.² His education is equally impressive. He is a graduate of New York University Law School, New York University, and Stuyvesant High School.³ Any law school in the country would be

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¹ See Jonathan Lippman, *Moderator's Introduction*, 73 ALB. L. REV. 1201 (2010).

² See Cyrus R. Vance, *Tribute to Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman*, 75 ALB. L. REV. 635 (2011/2012) (noting that while he was Chief Administrative Judge Lippman visited every courthouse in New York State).

³ As a graduate of The Bronx High School of Science, the author feels compelled to admit the prestige of Stuyvesant High School only grudgingly.

honored to have a jurist and leader of his caliber speak at their institution.

Yet, as busy as Chief Judge Lippman was, he not only attended and moderated a law school symposium at place other than his alma mater or a school rated in the top tier by U.S. News and World Report, but he also took the time to listen to and answer a question posed by a twerpy first-year law student entirely unknown to him and who, considering the other people in the room, it would have been entirely fair for him to politely ignore.

But, of course, Chief Judge Lippman's taking that time is ultimately unsurprising. The anecdote above is only to demonstrate to those who have never met the Chief that to him, no one is unimportant and that it is worth the occasional afternoon and momentary exchange to support and to validate the efforts of lawyers, law schools, and law students that are in the trenches of the law in this state—not only those who are in the clouds.

Over the past three years *Albany Law Review* and the students at this school have been blessed with Chief Judge Lippman's support in so many ways. By the time that these words are published, he will have spoken here three times that I have had the privilege of attending. Each of those times he will have allowed his remarks to be published by this journal.⁴ In addition to having been the subject of two articles in our journal in the past three years,⁵ Chief Judge Lippman has contributed two pieces of his own writing—one on the relationship between this school and his court⁶ and another praising one of our dearest and most recently departed alumni⁷—in the same time period.

We are deeply in Chief Judge Lippman's debt for his support and inspiration, and are immensely proud to be able to dedicate this issue of *The Anthony V. Cardona Annual Issue of New York Appeals* in his honor.

⁴ See Lippman, *supra* note 1; Jonathan Lippman, *Introduction to the Honorable Hugh R. Jones Memorial Lecture*, 75 ALB. L. REV. 653 (2011/2012); Jonathan Lippman, Christine M. Durham, Shirley S. Abrahamson & Chase T. Rogers, *Discussion on the State of State Courts*, 75 ALB. L. REV. (forthcoming 2011/2012).

⁵ Vincent Martin Bonventre, *Toward the Lippman Court: Flux and Transition at New York's Court of Appeals*, 73 ALB. L. REV. 889 (2010); Matthew J. Laroche, *Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman: A New Era*, 73 ALB. L. REV. 925 (2010).

⁶ Jonathan Lippman, *The New York Court of Appeals, Albany Law School, and the Albany Law Review: Institutions Dedicated to the Evolution of the Law in New York State*, 75 ALB. L. REV. 9 (2011/2012).

⁷ Jonathan Lippman, *A Tribute to Presiding Justice Anthony V. Cardona: A Great Jurist and Dynamic Leader of the Appellate Division, Third Department*, 73 ALB. L. REV. 653 (2010).