

JUDGE CARMEN BEAUCHAMP CIPARICK: A KIND AND  
TALENTED JURIST

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Is it possible for a jurist to be too nice or too kind? If so, Carmen Beauchamp Ciparick approaches the line, and you can count me among her many, many admirers for that quality.

When I started with the Court of Appeals' Central Legal Research Staff in 2007, just three months after finishing law school, one of the most intimidating aspects of the job was the prospect of actually speaking with the judges about a case I worked on. What if I made a mistake or overlooked a dispositive statute? My bosses and senior coworkers assured me that all seven judges were actually quite nice and unlikely to fire me on the spot. In particular, I noticed that when people spoke of Judge Ciparick, they could not help but smile as they universally described her as nice, sweet, kind.

My first one-on-one interaction with Judge Ciparick occurred during my second year with the Court of Appeals. I worked on a motion for leave to appeal for which the moving party requested expedited treatment. Judge Ciparick, as the reporting judge, was required to approve my report on the motion before it was circulated to the entire court. Because the court was in session, I took the report to her chambers myself. It was after 9:00 p.m., so I did not expect the judge to still be there. Ha! Nine o'clock, it turns out, was fairly early for Judge Ciparick and her clerks during session. Not only was she still there, she asked me to stay, while she and I, and one of her clerks at the time, read the report together. It might have been terrifying for a new attorney to sit watching while a judge of the highest court in the state inspected her work, but Judge Ciparick has a way of putting people at ease. We talked about the case; she made a few changes to the report and approved it for circulation. Because of our positive interaction, I went home that night and worked on my resume and cover letter, which I delivered to her the next day.

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Several months later, I received a call from Judge Ciparick, offering me a job in her chambers. By that time, I had given up hope of a chambers clerkship and was beginning to plan a career and permanent future in Albany. Nevertheless, I jumped at the opportunity. I will admit, though, that even then, I was a bit skeptical. Despite spending two years hearing how lovely Judge Ciparick is, and despite having one pleasant experience working with her on the expedited motion, I was skeptical that a person could be so very nice all the time. Surely working in chambers would not be all pleasant, all the time, but instead, difficult and stressful? Surely Judge Ciparick gets frustrated or angry occasionally?

As I suspected, working in chambers was challenging because there is a lot of work to get through. But it was not stressful, because Judge Ciparick *is* that genuinely nice, that lovely, all the time. Anyone who speaks about her will tell you this, and you may think they are exaggerating. They are not. I am not. Judge Ciparick fostered a sense of family and closeness among her chambers staff. We ate lunch together, we talked through cases together, and we went to events for the judge (and there were a few!) together. Judge Ciparick truly cares for her clerks as though they are members of her family. She will not only remember your birthday, but she will bring a card, cupcakes and a gift. Your joy and life milestones bring her joy; and your sadness and losses bring her sadness.

Judge Ciparick is a talented jurist; indeed, she has any number of awards recognizing her fine legal mind, her stellar work ethic, and her dedication to public service. Undoubtedly, her success will continue into the private sector. At the heart of it all, she is simply a gracious and kind human being. Working for her not only made me a better attorney, but a better person. I am truly honored to have worked with her, and to call her a mentor and a friend.