

Harsch seeks RI attorney general Lynch's job

By Dotti Farrington

Jamestown J. William W. Harsch has been on the campaign trail for a year as a Republican, targeting incumbent state Attorney General Patrick Lynch, Democrat, of Pawtucket, to whom Harsch, once a Democrat himself, lost his first race in 2002.

Lead attorney of a corps of lawyers serving as the island's town solicitor, Harsch announced his candidacy early and has been working a long campaign. In his last bid for the office, he said he had limited time, funds, and arrangements to counter those of Lynch.

Harsch has been a private-practice lawyer working with the local, state, and federal officials during both Democratic and Republican administrations. Harsch wants to be the state's lawyer so that he can work on "the letter and the spirit of the law . . . being strictly observed" by everyone, even or especially by politicians.

Harsch calls himself a political outsider and said that enables him to bring new perspectives into government. "The office of the attorney general requires professionalism, maturity, and a reputation separate from politics," he said

Harsch, 67, has been campaigning on his maturity and his long government career as contrasts to Lynch's youth and shorter career resume. Interestingly, Harsch tapped Jamestown Tom Shevlin, 24, a college student, who is still building his own resume that started with U.S. Senate page duties, to be his campaign manager.

Harsch charges

"From being fined by Rhode Island Superior Court on two separate occasions for professional misconduct to apparent violation of ethical standards, Patrick Lynch has proved over the last three years that he neither understands nor respects the high moral, ethical, and professional standards demanded of the office of attorney general. Rhode Island cannot afford to have the people's attorney engaging in political favors," Harsch has charged.

The office of attorney general is supposed to be a protector of people's rights against unfair profiteering and unjust penalties on bill payments, Harsch said.

Harsch has used a play on his name in declaring himself "harsh" about Lynch's errors on open forum rulings and campaign contributions, and his allegedly inadequate efforts on behalf of

consumers and against sex offenders, among dozens of other issues.

Some criticisms Harsch made against Lynch have made national headlines, notably on reports about Lynch's handling of the DuPont Corporation, a co-defendant in the case of multi-billion-dollar fines levied against several lead paint manufacturers. The state Ethics Commission recently turned aside Harsch's petition for investigation in the matter and Lynch dismissed Harsch for spinning the situation politically. Lynch was fined by the state Superior Court for inappropriate statements he made about the case, but not for other elements of the issues raised by Harsch.

Lynch's response

Harsch has also been challenging Lynch's acceptance of campaign donations from DuPont associates and from liquor interests because of the state's poor record on drunk-driving cases. Lynch says he sees no reason to return the contributions. He also dismisses all of Harsch's charges as inaccurate and mired in politics.

Harsch said he has been detailing multiple issues so voters may have a full understanding of the importance of the office of attorney general. His career jobs have

included chairman of the Rhode Island Public Utility Commission, a federal special assistant attorney general, and first director of the state Department of Environmental Management.

Whistler on tap for museum talk

James McNeill Whistler: His Unexpected Relationships will be the topic of Lunch with the Artist Tuesday, Sept. 19, at the Newport Art Museum.

The informal noontime discussion will be facilitated by Jamestown Richard Tyre. It is free for museum members. There is a \$3 charge for non-members.

The museum provides coffee for each session of Lunch with the Artist, and bag lunches are welcome.

For more information about this and other Newport Art Museum programs, call the museum at 848-8200.

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