

# Neronha

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was a challenging place to work. Their standards are very high, and you learn to set those standards for yourself, so you work very, very hard. I didn't have any social life at all."

In fact, Neronha said, he met his wife, Shelly Johnson, while he was being treated at New England Medical Center, where she was a resident.

When he learned of an opening in the office of the R.I. state attorney general, he decided to apply.

"I love Rhode Island and Jamestown, and my parents are here," he said. "Shelly had finished her residency and she was working at Tufts Medical Center, but she was looking to start her own practice. I knew I wanted to come back here and I knew I wanted to be a prosecutor. So, I brought Shelly to Jamestown and persuaded her that it was a great place to live."

In 1996, Neronha was offered the job as special assistant attorney general in the state AG's office. The "special" in the job title simply meant that he was a junior assistant AG, which he remained until his promotion to assistant AG in 2001.

During his years at the state AG's office, Neronha prosecuted

a wide range of cases, but three, in particular, stand out among his memories.

One was the 1996 grounding of the "North Cape" barge and its tugboat on Moonstone Beach, which resulted in a huge oil spill and 250 square miles of environmental devastation. The spill was the first since the 1990 enactment of the Oil Pollution Act, which was inspired by the "Exxon Valdez" oil spill.

The new law broadened federal enforcement authority in response to spills, and "we prosecuted that case jointly with [multiple federal agencies]," Neronha said, adding, "We imposed a very large fine and we made sure a lot of it went towards remediation."

A second case he singled out involved the Lincoln town administrator, who, after a year-long investigation and subsequent trial, was convicted of accepting bribes. The third prosecution Neronha noted involved a severely disabled young man who was sexually abused by his case worker – a trial whose timing was awful, too.

"The mother was my lead witness because the young man was too disabled to testify," Neronha said. "We had scheduled her to testify on a Tuesday, and, as we started that day of the trial, the World Trade Center towers were hit. It

was a truly surreal week because I was focused on a horrific case while the whole world was glued to their television sets for the latest news about a horrific disaster. The defendant pleaded guilty after I cross-examined him, and that was a week I will never forget. The case really affected me on a personal level."

### 'They are all important'

Neronha, who joined the U.S. attorney's office as an assistant U.S. attorney in 2002, looks back at his years at the state office – and their prosecutors – respectfully.

"Over there, the volume of work is so heavy, you're handling many, many cases at once. So, the challenge is juggling everything and still being effective," he said.

As the U.S. attorney, Neronha said he won't have any particular priority in case selection.

"We have prosecuted public corruption, significant white collar crime, gang cases, firearms cases and mortgage fraud. But I don't think any one type of case is more important [than] another. I don't think public corruption is more important than gun-toting criminals striking fear in South [Providence] residents. I don't think drug cases are more important than environmental crimes," he said. "They are all important. And as long as we have the resources to do them all, we should be doing them all – and we certainly have the resources here."

## Small to speak at CIAA quarterly members' meeting features talk

The Conanicut Island Art Association will hold its first quarterly members' meeting on Thursday, Oct. 8, at 7 p.m. in the meeting room at the Jamestown Philomenian Library.

The meeting will feature a talk by Jonathan Small of Middletown.

Imagine the thrill of a 50-year-old artist becoming aware that one of his own ancestors was also an accomplished artist. Small will discuss his discovery that his great-great-grandfather, Stephen Alonzo Schoff (1818-1904), was a master engraver and etcher.

Small became aware of Schoff's importance in American art about five years ago. He has since been researching Schoff's life and work, following a trail that has led him into the archives and print collections of the Smithsonian Institution, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the New York Public Library and the Frick Museum.

Largely forgotten today, Schoff's career spanned the introduction of photography, which had a profound impact on the role of the artist printmaker. Attendees will see examples of how Schoff adapted to the changes then taking place. While the technology of photography improved, allowing it to become more and more the accepted means of reproducing published images, printmaking was freed from its ties to reproducing art and was allowed to blossom as an artistic category of its own during the etching revival of the 1880s.

Schoff's career as an engraver/etcher was fascinating as he came in contact with, and befriended so many prominent 19th-century artists, such as Washington Allston, Asher B. Durand, John F. Kensett, John W. Casilear, Paul Delaroché, William Morris Hunt and Edmund C. Tarbell.

Schoff was best known for his published portraits of authors and poets, including Hawthorne, Emerson, Longfellow, Whitman and many more. He also found steady work as a bank note engraver.

The meeting is open to the public; there is no charge to attend.

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