

Rather I wish to speak to you as someone who has known Kate Hayes for many years, in both a professional and personal capacity. I met Kate more than 20 years ago when she served as my supervising attorney when I worked as a civil rights investigator at the Vermont Attorney General's Office. I have since retired from that position, and am certainly not here speaking to you in that capacity. However, it was in that capacity that I first got to know Kate. Working with her, I came to know Kate as hard-working and whip-smart - dedicated to truth, justice, and the rule of law. What I personally appreciated about Kate was the respect she showed her colleagues, as well as her subordinates. I especially appreciated her willingness to listen and to keep an open mind - both qualities that are important to have in a judge. Kate demonstrated these qualities when considering my opinion on the facts of a case and the law, even when our opinions differed heartily, and despite the fact that I didn't have Esq. after my name.

By the time Kate was awarded her judgeship and left the AG's office, she and I had become friends. As a friend, she has shown time and again how kind and generous a person she is - not just to me, but to others as well. On several occasions when I have appeared before Judge Hayes in yet another of my professional capacities, I witnessed the respect, empathy, and patience she affords those who are at the mercy of the court. When the legislature is not in session, I work part-time as a communication support specialist. The Vermont Communication Support Project provides services to people who have a disability that impairs their ability to communicate, and who have to appear in judicial or quasi-judicial proceedings. These individuals have a disability that may be cognitive, emotional or psychiatric, that severely hampers their ability to understand what is happening and to advocate for their own interests in matters that threaten grave consequence to their lives. While I am not speaking to you today in my capacity a CSP, I am speaking as someone who has experienced how Judge Hayes has worked with me in that capacity and, more importantly, how she has related to the clients I have worked with in that capacity. When the VCSP was in its infancy, it was little understood by members of the judiciary, court personnel, and members of the bar. Perhaps due at least in part to that lack of understanding of the work we do, or the special needs of our client population, there was no small degree of skepticism and/or resistance to communication support specialists' participation in court and administrative proceedings. Not so in Judge Hayes' courtroom. In my experience, Judge Hayes has always been open to and respectful of the role I have played as a CSP and, even more importantly, she has shown great respect, patience and consideration towards the clients we serve. Those clients have, as a rule, have been treated as marginalized individuals in our society. Not so in Judge Hayes' courtroom.

In sum, I am here to express my deep respect for Kate Hayes as being the hard-working, whip-smart, kind, respectful, and empathic human being and member of the judiciary that she is. You should be proud to have her sitting on the Vermont bench.

Sincerely,

Jeannie Lowell