

Judge Matthew Switalski: From One Bench to Another

“You have to have the right temperament to be a coach and to be a judge. You cannot be a screamer or one who likes to demean people, on either bench.”

These are sage words from Judge Matthew Switalski, who spends much of his time on the hardcourt when he is not presiding over his docket in Macomb County Circuit Court.

Volunteering as Girls Varsity Basketball Coach at St. Mary Catholic School in Mt. Clemens has not only given Judge Switalski a chance to spend more time with his own kids, but it has also given him an opportunity to share “all the life lessons you can learn from competitive athletics.”

Judge Switalski first volunteered to coach five years ago when his oldest daughter was a 3rd grader and the school needed coaches.

“These girls deserve someone who supports them, who gives them confidence, who teaches them that it is okay to be aggressive and strong,” shared Judge Switalski. “My style of basketball raises their self-esteem and gives them tremendous confidence—not just on the court, but as young women, in general.”

Although the team has been successful, Judge Switalski admits they had to “take their lumps” at the beginning, when they were younger than their opponents. But last year, the team achieved a 16-2 record, won the Regina Thanksgiving Tournament, and won its division. This year, they have started 5-0 and repeated as Regina Thanksgiving Champions. Judge Switalski says that the girls are proud to be Lady Mountaineers, and their school and community are proud of them, too.

“Judges are blessed with great jobs, a great living, and significant recognition from the public,” remarked Judge Switalski. “We are lucky to have these jobs, and we have a duty to show our gratitude by giving back in some way to our community.”

On his coaching future? Judge Switalski says he plans to coach his two younger daughters and their friends until they get to high school.

“My 7th graders believe they can win the title next year,” he said. “And I am already plotting the future for my 2nd grader and her friends.”