Attorney Takes Pride in Passing Along His Knowledge

AJ Di Mattia has done many things during his career as an attorney and public servant, but none as satisfying as passing on what he has learned to his students in the IDEAL Program at the University of Bridgeport.

During his 41-year career, Di Mattia has served for eight years as a New York Assistant District Attorney, assistant prosecutor and New Jersey Deputy Attorney General.

He has investigated and prosecuted crimes such as art theft, conventional street crimes, white collar crimes, government corruption and narcotics operations. He also deals with real estate, estate planning, management and administration.

A Brooklyn native, Di Mattia has been a Ridgefield resident for 20 years and has given 14 years of public service to the town. He has served as chairman for neighborhood watch, 911 emergency central dispatch and legislative meetings.

In addition, Di Mattia was elected to the Planning and Zoning Commission and served on the Zoning Board of Appeals. He was recently re-elected to his third 4-year term as a Connecticut Justice of the Peace.

When it comes to his two careers, Di Mattia said it is not a matter of balancing his work against teaching, because he has been teaching most of his life by providing advice to individuals and organizations.

“UB is just a joyful addition of a little bit more of what I do,” he said.

After leaving government service, Di Mattia continued as an instructor at training academies and institutes, teaching legal standards and requirements for intelligence gathering and covert investigations.

In 2008, he began teaching the United States Legal System for the University of Bridgeport’s School of Professional and Continuing Studies IDEAL Program. IDEAL is an accelerated undergraduate program for working adults.

He also teaches Business Law, U.S. Government & Politics, U.S. Presidency, Introduction to Criminal Justice, Criminal Justice, and White Collar Crime at UB’s three locations in Bridgeport, Stamford and Waterbury.

Di Mattia said he is not teaching students to prepare them for law school, but to provide them with essential knowledge for whatever field they choose.

However, if students are interested in pursuing a career in law, he is happy to share his experiences with the intensive and demanding training involved.

Di Mattia said in the course of his career, he has held several positions of trust. But in the IDEAL program, he is “entrusted” with students' minds, a responsibility he finds both humbling and exhilarating.

“I get to fill initially vacant faces, first with curiosity, then with surprise, wonder and finally with understanding and accomplishment,” he said. “Nothing has given me more pleasure or more sheer joy than this.”

For more information, visit the University of Bridgeport’s IDEAL website.

by Mike Russo
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