

Jeffrey Lerman

BY MIMI TOWLE



The spiffed-up new Lerman Law Building, on the corner of B and Second streets in San Rafael, offers more than a pretty facade for a well-worn corridor. Inside, Jeff Lerman and his partners, including wife Michelle, head up Lerman Law Partners, LLP. A lawyer for nearly three decades and a Marin resident for nearly half that time, Lerman recently stepped into the role of 2007 president of the Marin County Bar Association. His goal, one he shares with fellow board members, is to elevate the community profile of that 70-year-old institution. To this end, Lerman has written articles for the *Marin IJ* on two important community-related issues: prison reform and parent-teen liability for underage drinking—the latter particularly an issue during prom season. “Underage drinking and its companion, reckless behavior, are of such profound concern in our community,” Lerman says, “that last October Marin became the first county in the Bay Area to approve a law that imposes civil penalties on adults who allow underage guests to consume alcohol in their home.”

As a father of four, ages ranging from 11 to 20, Lerman supports this legislation: “This is the first prom season since passing this social responsibility law and we would like to help parents understand the extent of their liability.” To help further enlighten the public, the MCBA, in conjunction with the county board of education and YMCA, will host a town hall meeting where court commissioners, two lawyers and the district attorney will discuss these issues with interested parents of teenage children. Visit marinbar.org for more information.

You could live anywhere. Why Marin? About 12 years ago, we were living in Los Angeles. I grew up there and lived there all my life until going to Berkeley [as an] undergrad. I found that the smog there was really getting to me and I started researching other places to live. My main criteria for a new home were that it had to be close to a major metropolitan city [and] had to have great air quality and great weather. After looking all over the western United States, we decided on Marin.

What makes you happy in Marin? Being with my family and just being outdoors when the weather’s great.

What bothers you here? The traffic’s getting worse. Some more nightlife would also be nice.

What do you value every day? My health. Without that, nothing else matters. That and my family.

What is your personal idea of luxury? A weekend with no work...at a five-star hotel.

What person has influenced you the most? My dad. He had great character, an incredible work ethic—a brilliant guy, self-made and a great father.

What has been the most fulfilling moment in your work? Winning my first jury trial. The clients had become very good friends over the time leading up to the trial, and it was close. When you go through all the emotions and hard work that comes along with preparing for trial with a client, it creates a bond like nothing else.

What’s your desert island (favorite) book or album? “How to Get Off a Desert Island.”

What’s your favorite place to unwind? In Marin, it’s in the hammock in my backyard. On vacation, Hawaii.

Do you have a favorite Marin view? There are so many Marin views I love. I think my favorite is in this forested area right near where we live in Lucas Valley. A creek runs through it and when the sun hits the water in the late afternoon, through the trees, it’s as pretty as any place I’ve seen in the world.

How do you want to be remembered? I know it sounds trite, but it’s true for me: just as somebody who left the world a little better place for having been here.

