

In this season of renewal and romance, *ColoradoView* sat down with Judge Herb Galchinsky, otherwise known as Denver's Love Judge. By his own estimate, he has officiated at 1,500 to 2,000 weddings over the past 17 years, first as a magistrate and then as a Denver County Court judge. He's lost count of the exact number but has probably married more couples than anyone else in the Denver metropolitan area. In January, he had to leave the bench because of his age - when he turned 72 he was required to step down when his term ended - but he's already gearing up to continue work in the legal profession. And, of course, more weddings.

Sharp: So now what?

Galchinsky: I hate that I was forced to retire from a job I love. But this is the law. I'll do mediation and arbitration work and serve as a senior judge, filling in for other judges who are sick or on vacation.

Sharp: What won't you miss?

Galchinsky: All the conflict and dysfunctional people in the courtroom, the personal drama of people's lives.

Sharp: Were you born and raised in Denver?

Galchinsky: I've lived here since I was 9 months old.

Sharp: You've been married 50 years. That's remarkable.

Galchinsky: Yes, and to the same woman! My wife, Arlene, and I celebrate our golden anniversary this August. We

have two grown children - a son and a daughter - and four grandchildren. She's a big reason why I love marrying people.

Sharp: What are the secrets to a healthy marriage?

Galchinsky: Compromise. Couples have to be clear with one another, and they have to work hard. You and your spouse *will* make many mistakes over the course of the marriage. A lot of this needs to be overlooked, and some things you must simply accept, even if you don't want to. Pay attention to the other's needs.

Sharp: What bothers you about marriage today?

Galchinsky: People don't try hard enough to stay together. At the first or second sign of conflict, they throw up their hands and say, "I want out." You shouldn't do that. I never know how many of the marriages I've performed have lasted. But I get a lot of baby pictures.

Sharp: What led you into the wedding business?

Galchinsky: My mental health. Weddings were the perfect antidote to the harshness of the courtroom. Day after day I presided over nasty domestic and workforce disputes, where I'd have to issue restraining orders to keep people from

abusing and harassing one another. Juvenile court was no picnic, either. Weddings allowed me to shift my perspective, to transfer from the conflict and strife in the courtroom to a few hours of peace, tranquility, happiness and celebration.

Sharp: What courtroom wisdom do you bring to the wedding ceremony?

Galchinsky: That the home couples build together is their contribution to civility and decency in the world. We can't have peace in the world unless we have peace at home.

Sharp: What moves you?

Galchinsky: I especially enjoy reaffirmation ceremonies. About four years ago, I did a reaffirmation of vows for a couple celebrating their 70th anniversary. The wife was 86

and the husband was a few years older. That was something, to mark such a rare and wonderful occasion.

Sharp: What quirky wedding memories do you have?

Galchinsky: About eight years ago I was doing a summer wedding in a field near Castle Rock where 150 guests sat on bales of hay. The bride's father was a helicopter pilot and flew his daughter just a few feet from the wedding site, where she met the groom. After the ceremony, they all climbed back into the helicopter and flew away. I saw them a half-hour later at the reception. Another time, much less ceremoniously, a bride's father and stepfather exchanged physical blows.

Sharp: Do you have a particular style?

Galchinsky: I like to use humor because it relaxes people. Once a groom from Louisiana showed up late for the ceremony; turns out he missed the exit, but the bride was hysterical, thinking he had dumped her. I had to entertain the guests with funny war stories from the courtroom, like the time a young attorney who'd graduated from the DU (University of Denver) Law School showed up in my court and I requested he sing the campus fight song. He didn't know it, so I told him to learn it before he set foot in my courtroom again. A few weeks later the young attorney was back and sang the song all the way through in front of the whole courtroom. I turned to the other attorney and said, "I don't care what you say today or what your evidence is, you lose."

Sharp: What else does the future hold for you?

Galchinsky: Weddings until I'm 95.

Sharp: How can people reach you?

Galchinsky: Email me at barleeg@msn.com or call 303-726-3198. ☺

