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A portrait of Lou Mincarelli, a man with short dark hair, wearing a dark blue pinstripe suit, a white shirt, and a red and blue striped tie. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. An American flag pin is visible on his lapel.

Lou Mincarelli,
a founding partner of
**McCullough McLaughlin
Mincarelli & McCloskey,**
has devoted his life to
fairness, justice, and
helping others find a
positive path forward.

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Champion of the People

Two people forever changed Sheldon Stone's life: the judge who convicted him of a crime he did not commit; and the attorney who set him free.

Stone, a black military veteran originally from Willow Grove, had struggled with drug problems but was in the process of getting better. While in the Badlands of Philadelphia's Kensington neighborhood, he was stopped by two police officers looking for a white suspect who had committed a crime. As Stone remembers the interaction, the officers decided to take him in after learning that he had a prior conviction and was out on parole, even though he was not white.

Stone's case went to trial. Despite assurances from his attorney, and despite the facts of the case that suggested his innocence, Stone was convicted. He languished in prison for more than a year and a half. Then Lou Mincarelli, a founding partner with the Philadelphia law firm of McCullough McLaughlin Mincarelli & McCloskey, took

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by **BILL DONAHUE** photography by **JODY ROBINSON**

up Stone's appeal and was able to get him a new trial.

"Lou was a blessing," Stone recalls. "He told me, 'Don't worry about it.' We went to court [for the new trial], and he stood up and said, 'Your Honor,' and then he showed everything to the judge—straight to the point. He came in prepared, no notes or anything like that. Just like that, they let me out. I was amazed. He did all this pro bono. I love him."

Mincarelli built his career on helping people find justice. He worked as a full-time victim advocate in the Philadelphia District Attorney's office while earning his Juris Doctor from Temple University's Beasley School of Law. His career as an attorney began as an assistant district attorney for the

city, working under legendary Philadelphia DA Lynne Abraham. He prosecuted some of the city's most violent offenders, working in concert with various local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies.

His past experience serves him well in his work with McCullough McLaughlin Mincarelli & McCloskey. He devotes his practice to helping clients in need of legal counsel and representation for matters involving criminal law, family law, and workers' compensation.

"I have worked for a diverse list of clients—from people who are doctors, lawyers, and professional athletes, to homeless people, people with mental health problems, and people with drug-dependency issues,"

he says. “Everyone has a right to representation; that’s what the Constitution demands. I treat everybody like a person, first and foremost, not a case file.”

The work is demanding, and at times stressful, but Mincarelli considers it an honor to provide clients with the help and guidance they need in their quest for justice.

“I don’t always have the answers clients want, but I’m always going to try to get them the best outcome possible and try to help them move forward in their lives,” he says. “I like to sit down and lay out all the options, including the pros and cons. Ultimately it’s their lives and they have to deal with the consequences, so my job is to make sure they have the knowledge to make informed decisions before we proceed.”

Danielle Adams, a single mother from Montgomery County, can attest to Mincarelli’s character, integrity, and dedication to his clients. She hired him, approximately eight years ago, to represent her in a contentious legal matter involving child custody and support.

“It was a very messy situation between my son’s father and me,” Adams recalls. “Lou fought for my son and what was best for him in regard to his education and ex-

tracurricular activities. There’s always the uncertainty of a situation like that, in that you don’t know what’s going to happen, and you ask yourself: Am I making the right choices? I felt very safe and secure with Lou.”

At the matter’s conclusion, the judge sided with Adams. She attributes the favorable result to Mincarelli’s honesty, courtroom skill, and “no nonsense” approach.

“I got more than I asked for but in a way that was still fair to my son’s father,” she adds. “Everything worked out in a very peaceful way, and I think that’s largely due to the way Lou presents himself.”

These days, whenever she has a legal question, she knows exactly who to call. In the outside chance that Mincarelli cannot help her directly—if the matter involves a specific aspect of the law outside of his many areas of expertise, for example—he has a well-connected network that enables him to refer her to a highly qualified colleague. In other words, he makes sure the people he cares for are “in good hands.”

Making an Impact

Mincarelli’s direct yet respectful approach, as well as his depth of experience, may

explain why former clients keep his contact information close by. He even had someone he prosecuted while working in the DA’s office hire him because of his thoroughness and determination.

“I have some clients who contact me years after representation, looking for my help again,” adds Mincarelli, who represents clients throughout the Greater Philadelphia Area. “I hope it’s because they think of me not just as an attorney who worked on their case, but as someone who made something good happen in their lives.

“I have been able to practice in front of some very good judges, and that has had a big impact on me,” he continues. “People make mistakes, but I’m a big believer in redemption; sometimes justice needs to be administered with a merciful hand. I think I can do some good in Chester County, and hopefully I can keep doing that in the future.”

In the meantime, Mincarelli continues to focus on his family—he’s a husband and the father of a son and daughter, as well as the owner of two dogs, “a 95-pound Labrador retriever and a five-pound yorkie poo”—and doing right by his clients. He’s also very involved in the community. Not only is he active in the Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts, but he also serves on the board of directors for the Housing Partnership of Chester County, a nonprofit devoted to helping first-time homebuyers throughout the area.

Stone, the wrongly convicted man who won back his freedom thanks to Mincarelli’s efforts, believes “doing right” is in Mincarelli’s DNA. He says he would not hesitate to hire Mincarelli for any future legal matters.

“He genuinely cares about people,” Stone adds. “It’s not about the money or making a name for himself; it’s about people. He takes no sides. He’s going to go straight for the truth. He still calls me, checking in on me, to see how I’m doing. He’s got a warm heart. Like I told you, I love him.” ■



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