

Immigration lawyer helps many lives

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Body

As an **immigration lawyer**, Matthew I. Hirsch sees a wide variety of international clients in his Wayne office.

When Miguel Materin, an eye cancer specialist from Argentina, received a job offer from Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia, Hirsch handled the paperwork that would permit him to work.

"He has really taken care of us," said Materin, who now **lives** in Bala Cynwyd with his wife and four children. "Everything he told me would happen, it happened. I'm very thankful."

Hirsch said people often ask him how an **immigration lawyer** can make a **living** in Wayne. He tells them, "You don't have to travel very far to trip over an immigrant on the Main Line."

Hirsch recently was elected chairman of the Philadelphia chapter of the American **Immigration Lawyers** Association. The national group is having its convention in Philadelphia in 2004, so Hirsch's chapter will get the opportunity to play host.

"We're all very excited," he said.

The Philadelphia chapter meets monthly, each time at a different ethnic restaurant - "Burmese, Afghani, Korean, Italian . . . you name it, we've eaten there," Hirsch said. He said representatives from federal and city agencies often attend the meetings to keep the **lawyers** updated on policies and concerns.

Immigration lawyers, Hirsch said, "have a great awareness of the contributions of immigrants to our culture and economy. We tend to think globally. . . . We tend to have a little bit more awareness of the horrific conditions that affect people who **live** in some other parts of the world."

Hirsch became involved in **immigration** law when, in his third year of law school, he applied to the U.S. Department of Justice and expressed interest in working for the **Immigration** and Naturalization Service. He was hired and spent almost three years as a trial **lawyer** in New York, representing the government in deportation hearings.

He left the INS in 1987, joined a general law firm on the Main Line, and, in 1993, opened his own office.

Hirsch, a Wynnewood resident, said the bulk of his clients are multinational companies that "shuttle people around the world." He rarely has to travel, doing most of his work via e-mail and the phone.

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Hirsch said he had worked with clients from Africa, Asia, Europe, the Pacific Rim, and Central and South America.

"China and India sent a lot of students to America, and a lot of them find employment opportunities in the U.S.," he said.

He said he saw a direct correlation between the American economy and Americans' attitudes toward immigrants. In the booming economy of the 1990s, "nobody was grouching about immigrants taking jobs from Americans," he said. But since the stock market has dropped, and since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, "immigrants have become the focus of criticism," he added. ". . . It's a scandal to try to restrict immigration by painting immigrants as terrorists."

Throughout American history, he said, "in times of political upheaval and economic struggle, immigrants have been blamed for problems. . . . We're known as a country built and strengthened by immigrants, but we've also demonstrated a great fear of immigrants."

Hirsch said there have been few changes in immigration statutes since the Sept. 11 attacks, but "the policies and procedures have changed drastically." The INS has been taken over by the Department of Homeland Security and split into three agencies. Immigrants' paperwork is processed much more slowly because of the need for security checks and careful review, he said.

Patrick Rurange, a native of France, owns Le Petit Mitron bakery near the railroad station in Narberth. Hirsch, whom Rurange called "a very pleasant man," helped him become a legal permanent resident, and he is now an American citizen.

"Matt, he followed up on everything. He took care of it all," Rurange said.

Send People news to suburban staff writer Wendy Walker, The Inquirer, 120 N. High St., West Chester, Pa. 19380; e-mail it to PApeople@phillynews.com; or fax to 610-701-7630. Contact Wendy Walker at 610-701-7651 or wwalker@phillynews.com.

Snapshot

Matthew I. Hirsch

Age: 44

Residence: Wynnewood

Family: He is married and has two sons and a daughter, ranging in age from 5 to 13.

Education: Conestoga High School, Pennsylvania State University, and Widener University School of Law, where he now is an adjunct professor of immigration law. He speaks French and what he calls "immigration-lawyer Spanish" and is studying Italian in preparation for a family trip to Europe.

Hobbies: His free time is spent taking care of his house and garden and participating in his children's activities.

Public Service

Doations for Military Personel Wayne Senior Center seeks individuals to send letters, non perishables, toiletries to troops in Gulf. 108 Station Rd, Wayne; 610-688-6246. www.wayneseniorcenter.com. Call center for details & mailing address.

Food Drive Interfaith Coalition of Food Centers in Delaware County accepting donations at various locations. Call for specific locations. Main Office: 700 Morton Ave, Chester; 610-874-4132.

Volunteer Calls

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Churchville Nature Center Volunteers to help with special events, children's activities, clerical & support work, more. Volunteers ages 13 & up to participate in the Center's Summer Clubs. 501 Churchville Ln, Churchville; 215-357-4005.

Girl Scouts of Freedom Valley One time & year long services needed; guest, special interest, & troop leaders. Girl Scouts of Freedom Valley, 100 Juliette Low Way, Valley Forge; 888-244-4452.

Hospice Volunteers Holy Redeemer Health System seeks volunteers; training provided. Holy Redeemer Home Health & Hospice Services Northeast Office, 12265 Townsend Rd; 215-698-3737.

Ombudsmen Chester Co Long Term Care Ombudsman Program seeks individuals to make difference in lives of residents of nursing homes, personal care homes & assisted living facilities. 610-344-6350 or 800-692-1100 ext 6350.

Religion Calendar

Covenant Presbyterian Church Worship service, 8:30 & 10:15 a.m. Junior High Youth Group, 7-8:30 p.m. Thus. Senior High Youth Group, 7-8:30 p.m. Suns. 400 Lancaster Ave, Malvern; 610-648-0707. www.covenantfrazier.org. Junior high youth group meeting; grades 6-8. 7-8:30 p.m. Thus. Senior high youth group meeting; grades 9-12. 7-8:30 p.m. Suns.

Daily Prayer Service Daily prayer service during Iraqi conflict for those in military. Washington Memorial Chapel, Rte 23, Valley Forge; 610-783-0120. Noon Mons-Fris.

Har Zion Temple 1500 Hagys Ford Rd, Penn Valley; 610-667-5000. Programs held at member's homes discuss topics such as eating as a sacred act, respect for time and enhancing our physical space. 7:30 p.m. 8/12.

Meetings

The Art League Art discussions. Main Line Chamber of Commerce (Conference Center), 175 Strafford Ave (Suite 230), Wayne; 610-859-0765. 1 p.m. 2d Fri of month.

Barnes & Noble 150 W Swedesford Rd, Devon; 610-695-6600. French Conversation. 7 p.m. Weds Spirituality Book Group. 7 p.m. 2d Mon of month. Theater Talk. 7 p.m. 2d Tue of month. Creative Writing. 7:30 p.m. 2d Thu of month. Spanish Conversation. 7 p.m. 3d Tue of month. Fiction Book Group. 7 p.m. 3d Wed of month. Poets Here & Now. 7 p.m. 3d Thu of month. Journaling Workshops. 7 p.m. last Tue of month Living on Purpose. 7 p.m. last Thu of month

Hebrew Speaking Group Open to all who wish to practice speaking Hebrew. Borders, 80 E Wynnewood Ave, Wynnewood; 610-642-0362. 7-9 p.m. Weds.

LeTip Great Valley business networking group meets. New members welcome. Chester County Chamber of Business & Industry, 1600 Paoli Pike, Malvern; 610-458-8311. 7-8 a.m. Tues.

No Kidding! Chester County social group for adults without children holds various events. 610-486-6858. www.chesco.nokidding.net.

Simplicity Circle Group discusses reducing environmental damage by getting out of "consumerism loop." Audubon Visitor Center, 2877 Creamery Rd, Solebury; 215-297-5880.

Seminars & Classes

Computer Classes 4-wk classes; computer training & access. Neighbor to Neighbor Community Development Corp, 814 Clifton Ave, Sharon Hill; 610-461-8140. \$20. 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Sats, or 6-7:30 p.m. Tues. Registration required.

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CPR & First Aid Classes Delaware County Memorial Hospital (Medical Office Bldg Conference Center), 501 N Lansdowne Ave, Drexel Hill; 610-284-8158. Call for schedule, fees.

Horticulture Classes Morris Arboretum, 100 Northwestern Ave; 215-247-5777 ext 125. www.business-services.upenn.edu/arboretum. Call for schedule & fees. Registration required.

Graphic

HINDA SCHUMAN, Inquirer Suburban Staff

Matthew I. Hirsch, 44, speaks with clients Patrick Rurange (right), 39, and Stephane Wojtowicz, 32, at Rurange's Narberth bakery. Both are French; Hirsch helped Rurange become a U.S. citizen.

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Subject: **IMMIGRATION** (93%); US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (89%); **LAWYERS** (89%); CITIZENSHIP (78%); EYE DISORDERS & INJURIES (78%); JUSTICE DEPARTMENTS (78%); STUDENTS & STUDENT **LIFE** (76%); ASSOCIATIONS & ORGANIZATIONS (74%); CONFERENCES & CONVENTIONS (73%); LAW SCHOOLS (73%); EYE CANCER (73%); MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS (73%); ENTERPRISE GLOBALIZATION (72%); CITY GOVERNMENT (69%); SEPTEMBER 11 ATTACK (66%); GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS (63%); LAW ENFORCEMENT (63%); TERRORISM (60%); TERRORIST ATTACKS (50%)

Company: APCO ARGENTINA INC (58%); PACIFIC RIM FOODS INC (51%)

Organization: AMERICAN **IMMIGRATION LAWYERS** ASSOCIATION (56%)

Ticker: APAGF (NASDAQ) (58%)

Industry: **LAWYERS** (89%); LAW SCHOOLS (73%); RESTAURANTS (67%); GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS (63%)

Geographic: PENNSYLVANIA, USA (92%); NEW YORK, USA (79%); UNITED STATES (96%); MYANMAR (79%); ARGENTINA (79%); INDIA (79%); CHINA (79%); SOUTH AMERICA (79%); EUROPE (79%); ASIA (67%)

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