

H A R L A N   R I C H A R D S

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Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Rebecca Bradley  
Is An Admitted Felon

A recent Milwaukee Journal/Sentinel article exposed the fact that when Justice Bradley was an attorney she represented an ex-boyfriend in family court. I have not read the article so my information is second-hand (the most effective way to keep prisoners powerless is to deny them access to information - which is why a Republican legislature took the open records law away from us back in the 1990s). What I have heard is that Justice Bradley had an extra-marital affair with a man and subsequently acted as his attorney. Whether it was ethical to represent him under these circumstances was the gist of the article. I think the author missed the real issue.

Adultery is still illegal in Wisconsin. Sec. 944.16, Wis. Stats., states:

"Whoever does either of the following is guilty of a Class I felony:

- (1) A married person who has sexual intercourse with a person not the married person's spouse; or
- (2) A person who has sexual intercourse with a person who is married to another."

The penalty is up to a \$10,000 fine and 3½ years in prison.

Democrats in the state legislature have tried numerous times since the 1970s to repeal the law against adultery and have been blocked by Republicans. The crime is seldom prosecuted, and when it is, there is usually an ulterior motive which has nothing to do with the adultery.

Justice Bradley has campaigned on her promise to enforce the law as it is written. If a hapless defendant came before her with an adultery conviction, she would staunchly uphold the law regardless of its fairness or relevance. But when it comes to her personal life, it is okay to commit a felony and still sit as a Wisconsin Supreme Court justice because she is a darling of the conservative right. Right-wing ideologues like her do not believe that laws apply to them. Laws are for poor people and minorities, not the rich and their lackeys. Had she been a so-called liberal candidate, Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce (WMC) would be spending millions of dollars right now smearing her as a felon. And they wouldn't even need her own admission that she committed a felony. Does anyone remember what WMC did to Justice Louis B. Butler?



Justice Butler was appointed by then-Gov. Doyle to the state supreme court. This outraged conservatives because Justice Butler was black and believed in defending the rights of average citizens. I remember the campaign ads which labeled him "Loophole Louie" for allegedly letting a sex offender get his conviction overturned based on a technicality while he was a judge. It was a complete and utter lie from start to finish.

When Justice Butler was an attorney working for the State Public Defender's Office, he represented a defendant who subsequently had his conviction overturned on appeal. Justice Butler did what he was required to do - represent his client in a legal and ethical manner. The smear campaign cost Justice Butler the election and most of the public, if they remember him at all, still believe he used his position as a judge to let a sex offender get off scott-free. Does anyone believe that WMC, seeking a law-abiding justice on the state supreme court, will run attack ads revealing that Justice Bradley is an admitted felon? Not a chance.

I'm sure the judicial commission and Office of Lawyer Regulation will white-wash Justice Bradley's past conduct. The supreme court supervises the Office of Lawyer Regulation and they will do whatever is necessary to make sure one of their own fills the contested seat on that court. In my opinion, the Judicial Commission exists solely to cover up malfeasance by judges. If you doubt this, read my previous blog I wrote a couple of years ago about Judge Flanagan.

The issue here is not adultery, it is hypocrisy. Conservatives and the justices they support have an agenda that has nothing to do with right or wrong or upholding the law and everything to do with establishing their ideology. They see a two-class society: the wealthy who are above the law; and the rest of us. If you are one of the elites or one of their lackeys with the correct ideology, you will be rewarded. The rest of us are expected to live in poverty working at menial jobs for paltry wages. For those who object to the new paradigm, there's always a prison cell waiting for them and a police-state apparatus that routinely imprisons innocent citizens. Re-electing Justice Bradley to the state supreme court is an integral part of that police state.

Justice Bradley is an admitted felon. She should be disbarred and disqualified from running for the supreme court. Let her experience what it's like to be at the receiving end of her brand of justice.

Vote for Joanne Kloppenburg on April 5th. Put a stop to the corrupt state government run by Scott Walker and his conservative supporters.