



The fourth son of five children, Scott Johnson settled in Saratoga Springs at the tender age of 3, never having a chance to hit upon the place for the first time as a man. But it's probable that, had he stumbled upon us much later in life, he would have described his city much as did Somerset Maugham. One gets the idea that our Mayor is very comfortable here – probably because he seems very comfortable in his own skin. In the stressful world we live in, that level of comfort gets harder to find with each passing day. But Johnson has carved out a life for himself that fits like a glove and leaves him ample time to tend to the business to which he was elected.

THIS IS RETIREMENT?

A mere eight years ago, Johnson was at the pinnacle of his legal career, as one of two partners in the only firm outside of the Manhattan four that handled New York State's litigation in the nationwide Big Tobacco case – the largest civil settlement in United States history. Forty-six states and six territories sued the four largest tobacco companies to cover Medicaid costs for the treatment of smoking-related diseases and anti-smoking education for the populace. The monetary value of the in-perpetuity agreement could easily exceed a third of a trillion dollars, because of the open-end on the agreement. The human value of the mandated anti-smoking programs is yet to be evaluated.

At the time, Johnson was working in Albany and living in Saratoga Springs, having returned home after college and law school, one year with the Las Vegas

District Attorney's office and five years at a Manhattan law firm working in transportation law and commercial litigation. By 1996, he had put in four years with another litigation group in Albany and had become a partner in the firm that became known as Thuillez, Ford, Gold & Johnson, specialists in medical malpractice and health-related law. It was that firm that help litigate the tobacco settlement.

It's no secret that the life of an attorney – especially a very visible partner attorney – is extremely work-intensive. And there's a very true saying that tells us, "No one ever says on his or her deathbed, 'I wish I had spent more time at the office.'" Such a peak in one's career – as was the settlement -- often engenders the examination of "What's next?" – exactly the conundrum Johnson found himself facing. His conclusion, which still holds today: "It always comes back to family," who, for Johnson, consists of his wife Julie (Miranda), formerly of Ballston Spa, and one son Conor, a graduating senior at Saratoga Central Catholic High School.

So, New Year's Eve, 2006, Scott Johnson retired from the practice of law. He kept busy on the Board of The Hawley Foundation for Children, as President of the Board of Managers and Chairman of the Community Grants Program, with several business projects, and still very little time to improve his golf game. But the legal profession's loss was Saratoga Springs' gain. Within three months, with the approval of his family, Johnson was on the campaign trail for his mayoral position for the Republican party.

UP BY THE BOOTSTRAPS

Contrary to the look of his present lifestyle, Johnson grew up in more disadvantaged circumstances. After the divorce of his parents when he was 12, he and his four siblings moved with their mother to federally-subsidized Jefferson Terrace. Until his retirement, he had worked all the way through high school and beyond. Although officially retired, he still works on his own private business ventures on a part-time basis.

