

Arizona Mediators Talk Mediation with the United States Supreme Court

By Lynn K. Edington, Director of Business Development, Unlimited Resolutions Mediation, Inc.



“The notion that most people want black-robed judges, well-dressed lawyers, and fine paneled courtrooms as the setting to resolve their dispute is not correct. People with problems, like people with pains, want relief, and they want it as quickly and inexpensively as possible.”

Warren E. Burger, Former Chief Justice United States Supreme Court

On July 7, 1981 President Ronald Reagan nominated Sandra Day O’Connor to the Supreme Court of the United States of America. In September 1981, she became the 102nd justice and the first female member of the highest court of the land. It was a proud moment for women throughout the country and for Arizona, as Sandra Day O’Connor was a resident of Phoenix, Arizona.

Recently two Arizona residents, Michelle J. Perkins, Esq. and Dr. Beverly Owens, owners of Unlimited Resolutions Mediation, Inc., had the honor of traveling to Washington, D.C. to a musical program at the Supreme Court. Gordon Hawkins, the brother of Dr. Owens was performing. Hawkins, an opera singer was performing at the special invitation of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

It was during the reception following the performance that both Ms. Perkins and Dr. Owens were given the distinct honor of visiting with the Justices. Michelle J. Perkins, managing partner of a Scottsdale law firm as well as the mediation firm recalls Justice Kennedy’s desire to change the rules that apply to the batting order in baseball. Obviously an avid fan of the sport, Justice Kennedy concluded, “It’s harder to change the rules of baseball than the constitution.”

Visiting with Justice Sandra Day O’Connor both Ms. Perkins and Dr. Owens had the opportunity to speak about a common interest, Mediation. Justice O’Connor was pleased to hear about the growing popularity of mediation in Arizona. “No one wants to go to court anymore,” she told Dr. Owens. In this rare conversation they spoke about over crowded courtrooms and the escalating costs of litigation. All concluded, mediation is the future. Mediation is commonly used to settle divorce cases and its value is becoming increasingly important to the business community who uses it to resolve employment conflict and contract issues. Dr. Owens, who has been retained to facilitate workplace conflict and employment disputes throughout the United States, spoke with the former Justice about the importance of companies retaining an outside firm to insure neutrality and confidentiality, two essential ingredients for resolution.

After arriving back in Phoenix, the owners of Unlimited Resolutions Mediation were pleased to receive a letter and signed photograph of Justice O’Connor remembering their conversation and wishing the firm continued success.

“The courts of this country should not be the places where resolution of disputes begins. They should be the places where the disputes end after alternative methods of resolving disputes have been considered and tried.”

[Sandra Day O'Connor](#)