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Up And Coming Attorney Attributes His Success To His Italian Roots

It's another day at the Law Offices of Benfante & DiBenedetto, PLLC - court appearances in the morning; meetings with clients in the afternoon; office meetings in the evening; and plenty of work to take home. But today, as he sits at his desk, Joseph DiBenedetto takes a moment to reflect on how he got to where he is. The Ridgewood, Queens native was not shy in attributing his success to his family and Italian roots.

In January of this year, at the young age of thirty, Joseph DiBenedetto was offered a partnership by his mentor Joseph R. Benfante, one of the premier criminal defense attorneys in New York. More than anything else, he looked forward to telling his parents, Gerardo and Argentina DiBenedetto, of this promotion. "I couldn't wait to tell them about this opportunity. This means just as much to my parents as it does to me. This was my way of showing them that their sacrifices and struggles were not in vain."

The son of a dental technician and a housewife, Joseph DiBenedetto grew up in a traditional Italian-American household. His parents were born in Siano, Italy and like many others of their time, came to New York for a better life. He and his family continue to hold onto their Italian roots and traditions. He is fluent in Italian, each summer they jar their own tomato sauce and he makes sure that his mother never forgets St. Joseph's day. "I don't know of anyone who makes better zeppoles. I wish she made them every week."

Growing up, Joseph DiBenedetto always wanted to be a dentist. However, as he learned of his parent's struggles when they came to New York from Siano, Italy, he knew that he had a different calling in life. "I remember my father telling me stories about when he first came to New York. He was picked on, made fun of and taken advantage of because he had difficulty speaking English. This is when I decided to become an attorney. I wanted the opportunity to make a difference. I wanted to speak for those who could not speak for themselves."

From the outset Joseph DiBenedetto knew that he wanted to be a criminal defense attorney. "Everybody hears the words 'criminal defense' and they automatically assume that you are representing the worst people in the world. But the reality is that we represent people from all walks of life, including doctors, other lawyers, law enforcement personnel, professionals, as well as every day people. I take great pride in the fact that people rely on me at a time when they are most vulnerable."

Joseph DiBenedetto attributes his rise within his field to his hard work, courage and perseverance, all attributes that he learned from his parents. "Growing up, I watched my father work eighteen hour days and never complain. He even took work home and worked on weekends. He taught me hard work and sacrifice by example. My mother is a pillar of strength. Any time I feel nervous when handling a big case, I draw upon the same courage my mother showed when she left her parents and eight siblings in Italy to start a new life with my father. That's why there is no job too big or too small for me. And this is why I fight so hard for my clients and 'no' is not an option."

His father, Gerardo DiBenedetto, was not shy in expressing how proud he is of his son. "Since he was a kid, my son Joe was always an intelligent boy. Growing up he always made me proud. As a father I have been fortunate with him. Joe has always been ambitious. He set his mind to be a lawyer and he has succeeded very highly. I love him very much and I wish everyone had a son like my Joe."

When asked whether or not his age has an affect on how he is viewed by potential clients, Joseph



DiBenedetto gives an honest answer. "How old are you is a question I'm frequently asked. The truth is it's only natural for a potential client, whose liberty is at stake, to ask about my age and qualifications. When I first started working, I was only Twenty-Five Years old and I was meeting with clients who were old enough to be my father or grandfather. Luckily I had instant credibility with Joseph R. Benfante being present. But today, in a short period of time, I have been exposed to cases which attorneys who have been practicing for fifteen years have never handled. I have a great rapport with my clients and they become lifelong friends. And who knows, sooner or later I might get gray hairs and it won't be an issue."

Joseph DiBenedetto also attributes his accelerated development to his mentor and now partner Joseph R. Benfante. "I have been fortunate enough to be surrounded by great people, both in my personal and professional life. I've had the opportunity to learn from one of the best attorney's within my field. I will be forever grateful for the opportunity he gave me."

His partner and mentor, Joseph R. Benfante, who has been noted to be "one of the finest and most successful trial attorneys in America," realized the impact that Joseph DiBenedetto made while

employed at his office. "He has proven himself to be an irreplaceable asset. As a result of Joe's skills and successes, we now enjoy a partnership together." He further describes his protégé as "not only highly intelligent but has a talent for dealing with judges, fellow attorneys and clients from all walks of life. He exudes confidence, knows the law and possesses a smoothness about his personality which enables him to make points without being overbearing. When a client retains Joseph DiBenedetto they have hired a skilled attorney, whose personality, appearance, integrity and presentation casts little doubt that they are in the hands of a true professional."

As their practice is thriving and he looks ahead to what the future holds for him, Joseph DiBenedetto remains humble and takes nothing for granted. "Things have been great, but there are no guarantees. The only thing I can do is continue to work hard and things will fall into place."

He also realizes that his story is not unique. "All my family and friends have endured similar adversities. But it's important that these stories are told, so that we may be seen as an inspiration to others who are similarly situated and have similar aspirations."

The one time altar boy is now married to his high school sweetheart Michelle DiBenedetto. The couple is expecting their first child on May 23, 2007. When asked about being a father, he proudly stated, "If I can provide my child with the same love, support, opportunities and inspiration that my parents did for me, then I will be a successful father."

The Law Offices of Benfante & DiBenedetto, PLLC offers over thirty years of experience in the Criminal Defense field. They are a full service firm, addressing all of their clients needs ranging from pre-indictment investigations, up to and including the appellate process at both the federal and state level.

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