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Tom Horne visits Yeshiva High School

KEVIN SCHLANGER/Special to Jewish News Nov 27, 2013



Arizona Attorney General Tom Horne recently visited Yeshiva High School of Arizona to talk about his job and how people can make a difference in politics. Pictured, from left, are Rabbi Gavriel Goetz, head of school; senior Eitan Lev, who organized the event; and Horne. Photo courtesy of Yeshiva High School

Tom Horne, the current and first Jewish Arizona Attorney General, recently came to the Yeshiva High School of Arizona to speak with the students about his career. He also enlightened the students with stories from his past.

When asked what one of his greatest personal achievements was, he told of a family law case in New York that he fought regarding a mother who was divorced and had custody of a child but then died in a car accident; consequently, the child was sent to a grandmother. When the father of the child heard of the potential financial gain involved for the child, he went to the court to fight for custody of his son. Horne fought the case, saying that it was in the best interest of the child's emotional stability to remain at the grandmother's home where he had been. Horne won the case.

Additionally, Horne mentioned that he learned from his father the importance of studying of history. When his parents lived in Europe, his father was able to predict the events that would happen to the Jews in World War II and recognized the importance of leaving Europe before Hitler and the Nazis destroyed many lives. Therefore, when he was the Arizona Department of Education superintendent of public instruction, he put a big focus on the study of history and social studies.

Furthermore, when he was superintendent of public instruction, he put a lot of weight on a person excelling in his ability, not just reaching standards. Therefore, he started a program that gave anybody who did excellent in the all four portions of the AIMS, a full scholarship to a state college.

For the most part, Horne stressed the fact that neither nationality nor religion should come between a person and his aspirations. For example, he has a great desire to make a positive influence and difference in the world and help people. Therefore, even though he is not a native-born United States citizen and is a product of Jewish immigrants, he felt that this desire could be satiated by becoming involved in American politics.

Overall, it was inspiring to hear a message from a Jewish leader and how his Jewish background influenced his passion in politics and education.

Kevin Schlanger is a senior at Yeshiva High School of Arizona.