

Profiles in leadership

Shore leader narrows his focus closer to home

BY DANNY JACOBS

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J. Scott Robertson has always been active in his community, but in recent years two people have refocused his energy to highly local matters: his two young daughters.

“My priority is really my family,” said Robertson, of **Laws & Robertson P.A.** in his native Salisbury.

Since Robertson was honored as a Leadership in Law winner in 2003, he has stepped down as president of the **Wicomico County Bar Association** and finished his term on the Board of Governors of the **Maryland State Bar Association** and as chairman of the Wicomico Public Library’s Board of Trustees.

Five years ago, Robertson was also chairman of the Wicomico County Charter Review Committee, which ultimately recommended changing the county government to a county executive structure. Voters approved the change in November 2004, much to the surprise of local pundits, Robertson said. A new charter was created and the county elected its first executive two years later.

“By all accounts, it’s worked pretty well. We were fortunate to get some good people,” Robertson said, noting a lack of partisan strife between the Republican county council president and the county executive,



ERIC STOCKLIN

Former insurance-defense lawyer J. Scott Robertson now represents plaintiffs, a switch that suits his young family, he says. He’s also redirected his volunteer efforts, emphasizing the quality of life in his hometown of Salisbury.

utive, a Democrat.

Robertson, the 2004 recipient of the Edward F. Shea Jr. Professionalism Award from the Maryland Bar Foundation, also has changed his law practice. While he used to perform defense work for insurance companies, now he is a personal injury lawyer for plaintiffs. Robertson is still involved with litigation, but he can focus on one case at a time instead of juggling multiple cases at once.

“I work just as hard, but it works better with a young family,” he said.

It also makes Robertson’s newest volunteer position seem counterintuitive: president-elect of the Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce.

“Most people don’t associate personal injury lawyer with a chamber of commerce,” he said

with a laugh.

But the Eastern Shore organization does more than promote local business, Robertson said. It hosts the annual Delmarva Chicken Festival and plans the annual Salisbury Festival, among other events and responsibilities.

“The Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce is really a community-based organization,” said Robertson, who assumes the presidency next year. “It’s very involved with all aspects of civic life.”

The same could be said of Robertson, whose goal in all of his efforts is to better the quality of life in his hometown.

“The Salisbury area still has some aspects of a smaller community,” he said. “You really feel like you can make a difference.”