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Disability Rights Vermont Announces Changes

After nearly two decades Ed Paquin is retiring as the Executive Director of Disability Rights Vermont.

DRVT has thrived during these years. DRVT is a greater force for good in Vermont today than at any other time in our more than 30-year history in large part because of the wise and compassionate leadership of Ed Paquin. Under his direction, DRVT has helped thousands of Vermonters to advocate for themselves and create real change that improved people’s lives for years to come. These improvements occurred in many areas including police responses to people with disabilities, protection of victims of crime who have disabilities, use of force against patients in psychiatric hospital units and emergency departments, protection of vulnerable adults by our Adult Protective Services system, how state agencies respond to the needs of people with disabilities in public services from child protection to economic services to the right to live in the most integrated setting, and voting accessibility.

“As I leave DRVT for another stage in my life, a different pace, new challenges and new travels, I know it will be hard to part with the wonderful people with whom it has been my privilege to work over these years. They have meant more to me than I have the ability to express and I will miss the joy of working with them to make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities. I am comforted to be leaving the agency in the able hands of A.J. Ruben, our new Executive Director, who has served by my side as our hard-working Supervising Attorney for these 18
years. A.J. will bring the same expertise, diligence and good humor to his new role and our community will be better for it.”

Board President Sarah Launderville announced the news of A.J. taking on the ED position at a DRVT staff meeting by remarking, “we are excited for A.J. to begin his new role with us and at the same time the reality of Ed leaving us is now in sight. Ed’s work within DRVT and the disability rights movement has been extraordinary, to say he’ll be missed is an understatement.”

A.J. has worked at DRVT under Ed’s leadership for the past 18 years and he says “it has been a singular honor in my life. Ed embodied the best attributes of people striving to help others overcome unjust and unnecessary barriers to full and equal participation in our society. Ed and the staff of DRVT have proven time and again that compassion, hard work and creativity in support of people with disabilities does make positive changes in their lives and in the social systems within which we all live. I am grateful for the Board of Directors’ confidence in my ability to move from Supervising Attorney to Executive Director and am more committed than ever to work with the Board, the Advisory Council, the staff and, most importantly, Vermonters with disabilities, to fulfill DRVT’s mission of advancing the rights of Vermonters with disabilities.”

Paquin’s last day will be May 7th.

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A.J. Ruben and Ed Paquin

*Defending and Advancing the rights of people with disabilities & mental health issues, and of the Deaf.*

Page 2 of 2