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TOUCHED BY ANGELS

Every lawyer dreams of getting an ideal jury for a trial, but **Michael Francis Mahoney** of Lynn has a panel of 12 that watch over him every day.

Mahoney commissioned a local painter to create a life-size mural of people who have walked him through some difficult times, including his recovery from a diving accident that permanently paralyzed his legs when he was 21.

Those pictured in the mural appear in surreal fashion, all seated together in a jury box. The painting now hangs in Mahoney's conference room, giving the lawyer a kind of cosmic advantage in any negotiation as a jury of his closest allies watch over him.

Who did Mahoney select in his ultimate *voir dire*?



The mural features his father, Paul, and his uncle, Warren Meuller, who became a surrogate father after Paul died when Mahoney was 15, as well as friends who helped him conquer everything from physical rehabilitation to a broken heart following a failed romance.

There are even luminaries of sorts who made the jury.

Well-known attorney **Belden G. Bly** of Saugus appears in the mural, someone who helped Mahoney through his first year of law school and mentored him in his early practice days. Mahoney notes that "Belden still goes to Juvenile Court and visits his 106-year-old mother every day."

Mahoney wistfully remembers another "jury member," Dane Jensen, his "best friend going back to third grade," who was also the best man at his wedding. Jensen was a talented saxophone player and singer with the band "Road House" until he died in a car accident.

To add to the eclectic mix, retired firefighter Jim Abernathy appears in the drawing, someone who played baseball with a young Tony Conigliaro and later helped Mahoney develop condominiums for people with disabilities.

In fact, Abernathy and Mahoney were together at the deathbed of John Sullivan, whose likeness also appears in the drawing. Sullivan was a writer for the Sunday Post, Lynn Item and Boston Globe. "He was dying in the hospital with tubes up his nose, but we got him sitting up and laughing the night he died," says Mahoney.

Who's the child in the picture? Mahoney's son, Paul, sitting with friend Leo Wallace, a man who put Paul's first diapers on in the hospital.