

CHAMPIONS & VISIONARIES

M. EDWARD WHELAN III

President of the Ethics and Public Policy Center

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Edward Whelan III left government in 2004 with a résumé that would be the envy of most: No. 2 lawyer in the U.S. Justice Department's influential Office of Legal Counsel, senior lawyer at Verizon Corp., general counsel on the Senate Judiciary Committee and clerk to Justice Antonin Scalia.

Rather than land in a lucrative partnership, he chose to take on the presidency of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, a conservative nonprofit, and to pioneer the field of legal blogging.

For the past six years, Whelan has been the main contributor to *National Review Online's Bench Memos* blog. His commentary infuses national debates over judicial nominees, Supreme Court ethics and appellate court decisions — so much so that, when a Senate Republican cites outside research into the record of an Obama nominee, it's more likely than not that the handiwork is Whelan's.

One of his frequent targets, Goodwin Liu, was filibustered and withdrew in May as a nominee for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit.

Last year, Whelan got a scoop when he published a candid letter from Harvard Law School's Laurence Tribe to President Barack Obama.

The perch allows Whelan, 50, to advance conservative legal views with few restrictions. "I have a number of friends in private practice that don't get to do that," he said. "I'm able to speak for them, in a sense." — *David Ingram*