

## iAttorney

A professor's quest to automate the law



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Photos by Ralph Greenslade



Joseph Siprut is the founder and managing partner of Siprut P.C. His practice encompasses a wide spectrum of litigation and he has been appointed lead or co-lead class counsel in large and complex class actions. He also has first-chair experience in many aspects of litigation, including trial, arbitration and mediation.

**What's your favorite store to shop for work clothes?**

Honestly, I haven't bought "work clothes" — suits — from a store in years. I'm a big believer in custom clothing, especially for suits. And that doesn't mean getting a suit off the rack and having a tailor make alterations. It means having a suit made from scratch to fit your dimensions. The premium price is worth it.

**If you are meeting with a new client, or have your first day in court, what's your favorite power suit?**

If I'm in court, I think a dark blue or gray suit, with a blue or white shirt, is a good choice. The reason is that you don't want the judge to be distracted by what you're wearing. You want the judge focused on your argument. But that doesn't mean you look boring. I like to add flourishes in subtle ways, such as nice cuff links, a pocket square or the pattern on the shirt. With clients, however, I'm a little less formal. I still always wear suits but almost never ties. I hate ties and find them uncomfortable.

**What brand is your watch?**

Rolex — Oyster Perpetual Daytona.

**In one or two words, how would you describe your style?**

Formal foundation with bold and colorful flourishes.

**What do you wear on weekends?**

Depends on the situation. If I'm lucky enough to be playing golf, a golf shirt and shorts. In the evenings, maybe a sport coat and jeans.

**What's your favorite brand of jeans?**

I get custom jeans, too. If you're a guy, getting a pair of jeans to fit right is almost as hard as getting a suit off the rack that magically fits you perfectly. It doesn't happen.

**What was the first expensive piece of clothing that you purchased when you became a lawyer?**

Probably a custom shirt. The experience of getting that first shirt fitted, and realizing what a perfect fit actually felt like and looked like, helped me to understand the general importance of clothing fitting correctly.

**What advice do you have for a lawyer trying to improve his or her professional style?**

Get some good advice on basics to get pointed in the right direction, but above all else, dress like yourself. When you look good and you feel like yourself, confidence flows. What looks good on someone else won't necessarily look good on you though; style has to be organic and true. If it's not genuine, it just won't work.

**What is your main style pet peeve?**

Ill-fitting or heavily wrinkled suits.

**Who is your favorite designer?**

My favorite clothier and designer in Chicago is Eric Kipp. He's made all my suits for years.

**What is your favorite accessory?**

Cuff links. I don't own a long-sleeve shirt without French cuffs. Cuff links are such a classic and elegant look and they add immediate class and style to any outfit.

**What's your favorite brand of shoes?**

I have a lot of Donald J. Pliner shoes — I love their loafers, which I pair with suits a lot.

**What accessory are you most sentimental about?**

My parents gave me a pair of gold cuff links as a gift shortly after I started my law firm, Siprut P.C. They are beautiful and go with anything.

**Why should lawyers care about their style?**

Because good style that is true and genuine to your personality projects success and confidence. When you look like a schlub, it sends the message that you just don't care or have given up. That does not inspire confidence and does not project an image of success, which is obviously an impediment to business development.

I think it also impairs credibility to an extent with courts. Although if you're really brilliant, I suppose that brilliance will carry the day. To paraphrase Samuel Jackson in "Pulp Fiction" — if a pig had enough personality, he would cease to be a filthy animal. But that would have to be one charming pig.