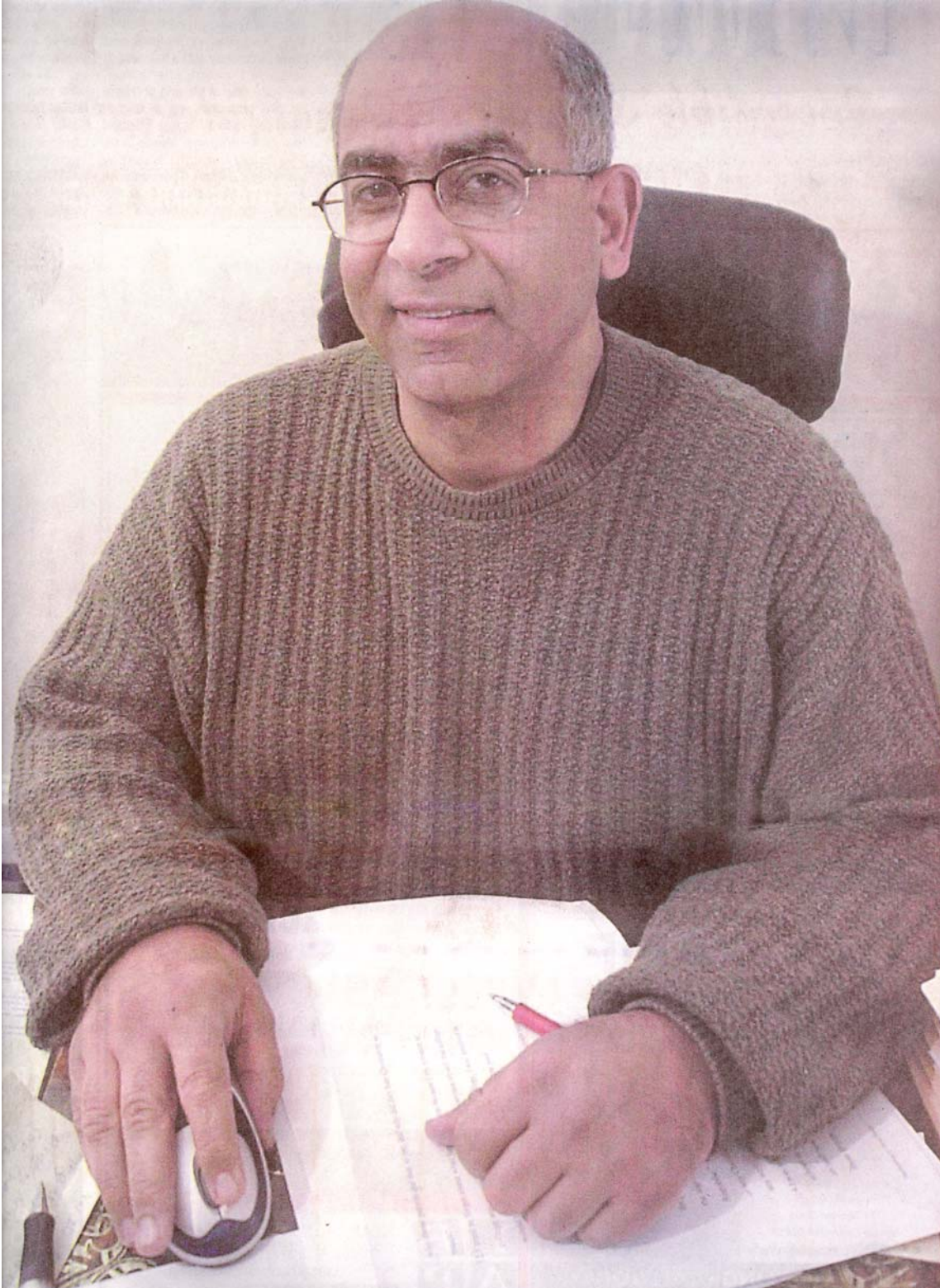


# FRAMINGHAM **TAB**



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL THOMPSON

Saher Macarius recently won a landmark case that could help thousands of immigrants adjust their legal status. Macarius said he is happy for his client, but is even more thrilled that the ruling might "bring happiness to a lot of people I don't know."

# Using the law to bring hope

## Macarius' recent legal success stems from a lifelong desire to help others

**By Liz Mineo**  
STAFF WRITER

For Framingham lawyer Saher Macarius, having won a recent landmark case that could help thousands of immigrants adjust their legal status is more than a personal victory.

It's an accomplishment he cherishes not only because it brings prestige and more business to his law practice, but mainly, he says, because it can bring hope to many people who can benefit from the ruling. "I'm thrilled because the ruling has brought happiness to my client," said Macarius at his Walsh Way office. "But I'm more thrilled because it can bring happiness to a lot of people I don't know."

The ruling, issued Jan. 5 by the 1st Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals, can help thousands of immigrants married to U.S. citizens obtain green cards without having to leave the United States.

The case was brought by Wissam Succar, a Lebanese national who sought asylum in 1998. Without the ruling, Succar, who married a U.S. citizen in 2001, while his asylum case was pending, would have been deported and barred from re-entering the country for up to 10 years. Succar, who is now waiting to receive his green card, was represented by Macarius.

For Macarius, 52, helping people is the best part of being a lawyer. And being an immigration attorney allows him to help many more people due to the impact of rulings in other courts across the nation.

"Being an immigration lawyer suits my desire to help people," said Macarius. "A friend of mine was asked the other day if this case would make me rich. He told the person, 'He's already rich.' Not because of the money, but because of all the opportunities to help I can have. Since I was young, I've always liked to help people. It's part of my nature."

Growing up in his native Egypt and working as a police officer with a law degree there, Macarius helped people out as much as he could, he said. While studying law in Massachusetts, he took courses on immigration law to help friends and acquaintances who wanted advice on immigration issues. And teaching Sunday school at his church is also part of his efforts to help people.

A practicing Christian, Macarius attends St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church in Natick. The Coptic church is based on the teachings of St. Mark, who traveled to Egypt in 61 A.D. The name Coptic comes from the Greek name for Egypt, Aigyptos, and refers to Christians from Egypt. Coptics represent between 10 and 15 percent of Egypt's population. The main religion in Egypt is Islam.

Being a Coptic in Egypt was not easy, said Macarius. There are hardly any Coptics who hold positions of power in Egypt, and attacks against Coptics from Muslim fundamentalists have increased in the past decades in that country. Macarius feels grateful to the United States, where he can practice his faith freely. "Church is the most important thing in my life, more important than anything else," said Macarius, who came here in 1984 looking for better opportunities. "It's my beginning and my end. I can stop being a lawyer, but I can never stop being a Christian."

Being an immigrant himself helps Macarius do a better job as an immigration lawyer, he said. Like many immigrants, Macarius worked hard to climb up the ladder and chase his American dream. After he

came here, he worked hard to master his English skills and while studying to become a lawyer, he worked as an account manager for a health clinic in East Boston.

"It really helps me understand people and be more sensitive to their plights," he said. "I know what it means to get a green card. I know what everything meant to them."

After the ruling, Macarius received dozens of calls and messages from lawyers who wanted to congratulate him and people who asked him for advice on their cases. A modest man, Macarius has a hard time with being in the spotlight, but he's willing to do it if that helps him help more people.

"I wish I could serve everybody who needs help," he said. "I'm happy I'm helping people to get what they're entitled to."