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Lawyer Fred Bartlit, above, of Denver and attorney Glen Summers, of Castle Rock with son Brendan return to Centennial Airport in triumph Tuesday night after arguing one of the Bush election cases in Florida. Both are partners in the Denver-and Chicago-based firm of Bartlit Beck Herman Palenchar and Scott.

Marc Piscotty
News Staff
Photographer

History written as case was heard

LAWYERS from 4A

"When you're in court as a trial lawyer, it's like any other big case," said Bartlit, who has been practicing law for 40 years.

After Sauls ruled on Monday that Gore's legal team had failed to prove any of the challenges it had raised, Bartlit took another phone call. This one came from Bush himself.

"He is a man of few words," Bartlit said. "He said, 'Thanks so much. I'm looking forward to getting together.'"

For Summers, 31, the two weeks in Florida came in the midst of a year that's seen him try several big cases in other states.

"It was a case of extraordinary importance and it was tried in an incredibly compressed time-frame," said Summers, a former law clerk for U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia.

"It was just a great honor to be called down to represent Gov. Bush," Summers said after being greeted at Centennial Airport by his wife and two sons. "He had the choice of just about any lawyer in America and any firm."

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Denver attorneys bolster Bush's case

Pair blunted challenges from Gore in Florida circuit court

By Kevin Vaughan

News Staff Writer

Glen Summers was shopping at Nordstrom's the Saturday before Thanksgiving when his cellular telephone brought him an unexpected call.

Would you come to Florida and help Texas Gov. George W. Bush fight for the presidency in court?

Fifteen hundred miles away, Fred H. Bartlit was at his daughter's wedding reception when

his phone rang and he faced the same question.

By 4 o'clock the next morning, the two partners in Bartlit Beck Herman Palenchar and Scott were on their way to Tallahassee for an intense two-week battle, first over military ballots that weren't counted and then over Vice President Gore's challenge of the election results in Florida.

"This was the most intense experience I've ever had while practicing law," Summers said Tuesday evening after he and Bartlit returned to Colorado following their win the day before in Gore's contest of the election results.

Bartlit and another partner in the firm — which has offices in Denver and Chicago —

handled the bulk of the two-day trial conducted by Circuit Judge N. Sanders Sauls.

"Our job was to attack the Gore case and put on our case," Bartlit said.

Bartlit handled the witnesses. Phil Beck of Chicago, one of Bartlit's partners, handled evidence related to vote-counting machines.

As they worked, history played out around them.

Bartlit, 68, admitted it was something he considered before he went to work in Florida. But in the courtroom, he paid little attention to the thought he was arguing a case with profound impacts on the country's history.

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