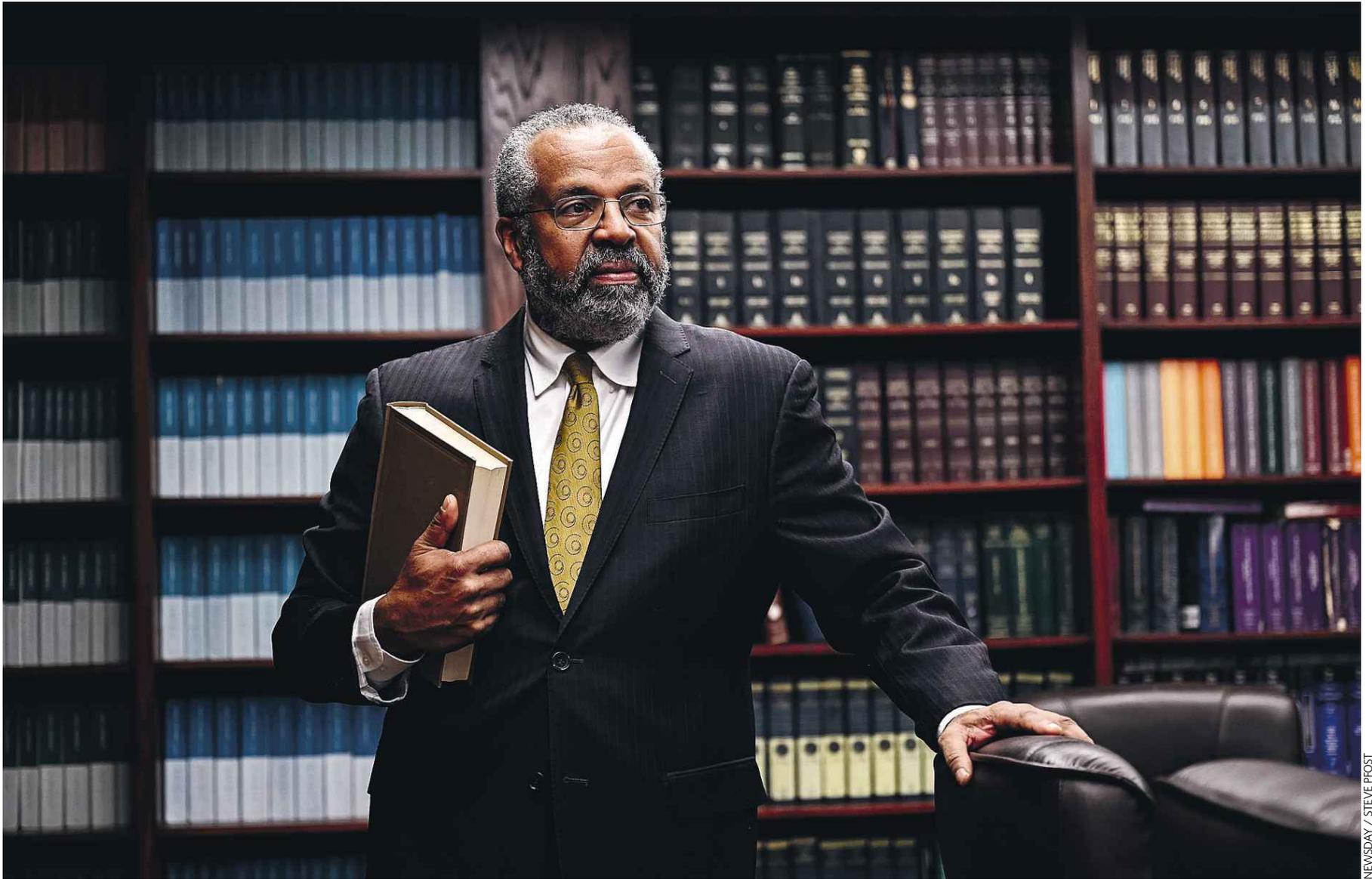


The pulse of change



NEWSDAY / STEVE POST

Attorney Fred Brewington's experiences with racism — starting on his first day of second grade at Lindner Place Elementary School — helped set the direction of his career.



After George Floyd and the protests, there is a real possibility for change, but we need to go at this with a jack hammer because people are slow to change and systems are slower to change.”

Fred Brewington

Fred Brewington was a second-grader when he was a part of the court-ordered integration of the Malverne School District. “When I left my Black school, I realized for the first time that people didn’t like me because of the color of my skin,” Brewington said.

He’ll never forget that first day at Lindner Place Elementary School. “There was picketing by the folks from the white community, and the press greeted me as I arrived at school.”

The impact was huge. Brewington would take up anti-racism as

part of his life’s work in law. Before opening his firm in 1987, he worked with lawyer Vernon C. Mason, was a clerk at the Office of the Legal Counsel of the U.S. Senate as well as the Community Organization Legal Assistance Project of the National Conference of Black Lawyers and the Community Development Legal Assistance Center.

He’s long been a social justice advocate, challenging the “at large” voting system in the towns of Hempstead and Islip along with discriminatory practices on Long Island in such areas as affordable housing and employment.

The 64-year-old, who lives in Freeport with his wife, works pro

bono advising community groups, and for 30-plus years, he’s volunteered as a football coach in the Malverne School District. Brewington has received numerous awards, including one from the New York State Bar Association’s Committee on Civil Rights.

Has he grown weary of the fight? “I’m hopeful. After George Floyd and the protests, there is a real possibility for change, but we need to go at this with a jack hammer because people are slow to change and systems are slower to change.”

Brewington is hardly finished “bringing people to the altar,” he said. “I’m never satisfied.”