



Statement by attorney Jeffery M. Leving who helped reunite Elian Gonzalez with his father on the death of former Cuban President Fidel Castro

CHICAGO, Nov. 30, 2016 - Internationally-acclaimed family law attorney Jeffery M. Leving issued the following statement on the death of former Cuban President Fidel Castro.

Leving helped reunite Elian Gonzalez with his father in Cuba, who saw Castro as a father figure. "He is a father who, like my father, I wanted to show him everything I achieved, that he would be proud of me," Gonzalez stated.

"I vividly remember Elian's great uncle Manuel Gonzalez speaking with Elian's father in Cuba while I was in Manuel's Florida home," Leving reminisced. "That emotionally-charged phone conversation is something I will never forget, as well as later representing Elian's great uncle Manuel while he emotionally testified in the United States Senate."

"The strong emotions and complex family dynamics in this case resulted from Elian's family having strong differences of opinion as to whether or not he should be reunited with his father in Cuba after his mother drowned attempting to bring him to the US from Cuba."

Leving's focus was to protect the rights of Elian's father and reunite father and son. Although Leving's main focus was not the reported international tug-of-war between the US and Cuba, he was in contact with then current President Clinton's counsel concerning the case and received support from former President Jimmy Carter for his position in the reunification. Leving's meeting with Elian's paternal and maternal grandmothers in the Cuban Interest Section in Washington, D.C., was also a strong motivator for him, as his grandparents also supported reunification.

Elian's reunification with his father in Cuba was never political, but always a paternal and children's rights issue to Leving.



Attorney Jeffery M. Leving

