

ORIGINAL

1 STATE OF WISCONSIN CIRCUIT COURT RACINE COUNTY

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5 Memorial Tributes To:

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7

LOUIS F. GERARD, ESQ.

8

DEXTER D. BLACK, ESQ.

9

HONORABLE THOMAS P. CORBETT

10

HONORABLE FRANCIS H. WENDT

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TRANSCRIPT OF MEMORIAL SERVICE

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Record made in the above-entitled matter before
the HONORABLE STEPHEN A. SIMANEK, March 22, 1996,
commencing at 11:15 a.m.

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Robin G. Harmsen, RPR
Official Court Reporter

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1 JUDGE SIMANEK: I wish to welcome you here on
2 behalf of all of the circuit judges for Racine County. I
3 am Judge Simanek, Chief Judge for this District.

4 Also present are judges for Racine County,
5 Judge Nancy Wheeler, Judge Wayne Marik, Judge Allan
6 Torhorst, Judge Richard Kreul, Judge Dennis Flynn, Judge
7 Emily Mueller, and retired judge, Judge Harvey.

8 Other judges are not able to be here at this
9 time. Judge Ptacek is on his way over. He's involved in
10 some hearings right now. Judge Barry is unable to be
11 here because of an illness of his father, and Judge
12 Vuvunas is unable to be here because his house burned
13 earlier this week.

14 We are ready to proceed in this memorial
15 tribute to our comrades Louis Gerard, Dexter Black, Judge
16 Thomas Corbett, and Judge Francis Wendt.

17 Mr. Muratore, President of the Bar Association,
18 the floor's yours.

19 MR. MURATORE: Thank you, Your Honor.

20 It's our purpose today to pay tribute to four
21 deceased lawyers from Racine County whose practice here
22 and, among other things, were engaged in public service
23 in one capacity or another.

24 One of them was a supervisor of the county
25 board, a corporation counsel. Another one was a district

1 attorney for Racine County in addition to being in
2 private practice. And two of the others we are paying
3 tribute here today were judges here in Racine County,
4 Wisconsin.

5 All of them made a substantial difference in
6 the community and made it a better place, and we want to
7 pay tribute to them for the good that they have done.

8 The presentations will be made orally and have
9 been reduced to writing, and at the conclusion we will
10 ask the Court to make those written records a part of the
11 Court's permanent records for use or for inspection by
12 the general public.

13 I would like to begin now by introducing to you
14 Keith Gerard and William Gerard, who will do the specific
15 tribute for their father, Louis Gerard.

16 MR. KEITH GERARD: On behalf of the Gerards,
17 thank you. I would like to thank you, Mr. Muratore, and
18 Racine County Bar Association and also Mr. Drummond and
19 the members of that association for the opportunity to
20 remember our father.

21 Dr. Gerard will be first.

22 DR. WILLIAM GERARD: Good morning. My name is
23 Bill Gerard.

24 Louis Gerard, and Lou, as all of his friends
25 called him, is my dad. I also appreciate the opportunity

1 to celebrate his life with you today.

2 Louis Gerard was born in Peru, Illinois, in
3 1917. His mother and father were European immigrants.
4 They met with many hardships together during those early
5 years. His dad was a coal miner; his mom was a nurse.

6 And when he was about ten years of age, the
7 family moved to West Allis, Wisconsin, where they lived
8 for the rest of their lives. He attended school there
9 and eventually went on to college in Madison, graduating
10 from the University of Wisconsin with a degree in
11 engineering.

12 My brother Keith and I are both University of
13 Wisconsin graduates. We know that he was very proud of
14 that fact.

15 At the start of World War II Dad tried to enter
16 the military, was rejected because of poor vision. What
17 he lacked in vision, he certainly made up for in
18 insight.

19 During the war Dad worked at Allis Chalmers as
20 an engineer, and he also met our mom there and married
21 her.

22 His second and lesser accomplishment there
23 while working at Allis Chalmers was his work on the
24 Manhattan Project, which was development of the first
25 atomic bomb. He felt that destiny kept him out of the

1 military so he could work on a more important
2 assignment.

3 Dad worked as an engineer at Allis Chalmers for
4 about fifteen years, and at age thirty-nine decided to
5 study law, enrolling in Marquette University. Keith and
6 I were nine and twelve at that time. Mom went to work
7 and Dad commuted to Milwaukee daily from Sturtevant for
8 the next three years. Keith and I learned to be quiet.
9 We learned to be really quiet around exam time.

10 Dad worked construction during the summer for
11 Rudi Madsen. He served as a village clerk in
12 Sturtevant. That was his first government political job,
13 and he graduated from law school in September of 1959.

14 After graduation the family went as a group to
15 Madison. We all attended a private swearing-in ceremony
16 for Justice Fairchild in the Supreme Court chambers. We
17 were all very proud. We knew how hard he worked to
18 become a member of the Bar.

19 Dad's first case after hanging out his shingle
20 on the front porch of our house was to try to collect an
21 \$11 bill for the local hardware store. We think his fee
22 was \$2.50 for that case.

23 Dad always said that a dollar spent on
24 education is never wasted. Keith and I gave him a lot of
25 opportunity to test that theory. He and Mom helped us

1 through bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, and
2 doctorates, and at various periods in between when we had
3 no idea what we wanted to do. How they kept up the house
4 payments, car payments, and all the other obligations
5 while simultaneously having one son in medical school and
6 another one in law school is beyond me.

7 Between the two of us, Keith and I have degrees
8 in fine arts, engineering, business, medicine, and law.
9 I'm not sure I could have been as patient or
10 understanding as they were.

11 Truly, it's not a mystery. They believed in
12 the importance of education. Mom and Dad were only able
13 to help us through these times by sacrifice and by doing
14 without a lot of the finer things that they both
15 enjoyed.

16 MR. KEITH GERARD: During his career he was a
17 partner in three law firms in his family.

18 The first firm he joined was Harvey, Weber,
19 Gerard & Jones. That first firm was notable for two
20 major contributions to this county. The first, that it
21 provided two dedicated jurists as the Honorable
22 Richard G. Harvey and Judge Williams Jones. The second
23 thing was that it conducted the most outstanding
24 Christmas parties of any office before or since in the
25 history of this county.

1 Second firm was the firm of Weber & Gerard.
2 It's a pleasure to see Bob Weber here today. It was a
3 happy and prosperous firm and very happy time for my
4 father. Bob Weber and Father worked long days over at
5 744 Main Street. They were contemporaries, and Bob got
6 dad interested in probably the only hobby that he had was
7 in back yard swimming pools. They both shared a lot of
8 fun and ideas. The rest of the year it was mostly all
9 work.

10 Finally, at last was Gerard & Gerard. I
11 graduated from law school in 1979 and joined my father
12 with the Main Street office. It was fully a family
13 enterprise. My mother ran the office, and Dad and I went
14 to wherever she sent us to.

15 I practiced law with my father for ten years.
16 He taught me all the stuff they don't teach you in law
17 school. They don't teach you what to do when a client
18 cries, how to settle a case. How to try cases a lot but
19 not so much how to settle a case, how to behave in the
20 courtroom.

21 When I went to try my first case, it was sort
22 of like my first day at school. I was five years old.
23 My father was going somewhere else. He left me standing
24 down here in front of the courthouse, gave me a pat on
25 the back and said, "Give them hell, son," and left me

1 standing there in front of a very big courthouse.

2 I was offered a job in Madison to work with the
3 State of Wisconsin, and at that time Dad began to wind
4 down his practice. I'm very, very grateful, our whole
5 family is, to John Foley and Dick Kreul, now Judge Kreul,
6 and Attorney Wes Muckler and several other lawyers in
7 town here who helped my father with some of the larger
8 cases that he had at that time to wind down his practice,
9 gave him a lot of support, advice, made him feel good
10 about wrapping up his career.

11 During his career Dad's served Racine County in
12 several elected and appointed positions. As was
13 mentioned by Mr. Muratore, he was a member of the Racine
14 County Board of Supervisors, he was Racine County
15 Corporation Counsel, he was the President of this Racine
16 County Bar Association, and he was a Circuit Court
17 Commissioner for the Civil Division.

18 As a civil division commissioner he did a lot
19 of pretrial conferences, took his duties very seriously.

20 Dad particularly enjoyed conducting pretrial
21 conferences. He worked hard on trying to resolve cases
22 without having to go to a trial. He had a very positive
23 judicial bedside manner, and he would always start a
24 pretrial conference with the attorneys gathered around
25 and say, "Gentlemen, how can we settle this case." He

1 was very proud when he could show the judge at the end of
2 the day how many of the cases had indeed been settled
3 out, usually to the benefit of both sides and certainly
4 to the benefit of the very busy judges in this district.

5 One of dad's favorite duties as a circuit court
6 commissioner was performing wedding ceremonies. He
7 enjoyed meeting people. And in doing these wedding
8 ceremonies, we discovered that you meet all sorts of
9 people. He married people in his office, he married them
10 at their homes, he married them at our home, he married
11 them at parks, he married them at the Lighthouse, off
12 shore on Lake Michigan, and even once in Racine County
13 Jail, where the groom was not allowed to kiss the bride
14 for security reasons.

15 At a wedding out on the lake they were coming
16 back after the wedding on the boat. And the groom and my
17 father were talking, and the groom asked my dad if he was
18 married. My father replied, "Oh, yes, I've been married
19 for about 40 years now." Dumbfounded, the groom looked
20 at my father and said, "All to the same woman?"

21 Last, but not least, he was appointed
22 unofficially the griller of steaks at the Annual Bar
23 Association picnic at Johnson Park, a position he shared
24 with Fred Wheeler for many years. Dad wasn't a chef or
25 cook or gourmet, but I think what he truly enjoyed about

1 all that, having all one hundred members of the Bar and
2 coming to the picnic and talking with just everybody,
3 whether he worked with them, all the people he enjoyed
4 working with so much over the years.

5 He worked hard all his life, but he knew how to
6 have fun. He enjoyed hosting friends around the pool in
7 the summertime, and he made an absolutely shattering
8 Bloody Mary. To this day I don't know the formula, but
9 it was outstanding.

10 He was a gentleman in court, and he was
11 respectful of the court. He could represent clients
12 vigorously without being offensive or disrespectful.
13 Several judges mentioned how much they appreciated that.

14 Dad loved people. He had a great talent for
15 listening to people and understanding their concerns and
16 their worries and their problems. He was able to make
17 them feel more secure, help them to regain their
18 confidence. He understood they had an advocate who
19 believed in them and who believed in their cause.

20 That talent was at the heart of his dedication
21 as an advocate. Their concerns became his concerns.
22 Their problems became his problems.

23 Bill Phillips, an administrative law judge,
24 stopped me outside the county building one day just
25 before I left for Madison, and he said what a pleasure it

1 had been having my father in a hearing, what a gentleman
2 he was. And he stopped for a moment, gauging how I was
3 going to take this, he said, "Do you know your dad is not
4 a legal scholar." I said, "Yeah, I think we'd agree on
5 that." And he said, "But no one does a better job of
6 representing a client than your dad does."

7 DR. WILLIAM GERARD: This eulogy wouldn't be
8 complete without one of Dad's best known stories.

9 His favorite politician was Senator Everett
10 Dirkson. The Senator was known for his gravelly voice,
11 tousled white hair, and theatrical manner. Dirkson was
12 the Illinois Republican minority Senate leader from 1959
13 to the time of his death in 1969.

14 It is told in the middle of the night one
15 night, Mrs. Dirkson awakened, hearing a noise downstairs,
16 and woke the senator saying there was a robber in the
17 house. The senator, without opening an eye, rolled over
18 and announced, there may be a robber in the house but
19 never in the senate.

20 Whenever we have a family celebration,
21 including weddings, graduations, and birthdays, Dad would
22 never miss the opportunity to invoke his favorite
23 Dirkism. He would lift his glass, right to his full
24 height, and give the following toast: "This is indeed a
25 joyous occasion."

1 Indeed, the celebration of the life of
2 Mr. Gerard has been a most joyous occasion.

3 Thank you for sharing this time with us.

4 MR. KEITH GERARD: In closing, I'd like to say
5 over the past years Louis R. Gerard had the honor of
6 delivering this sort of memorial address for others of
7 his fellow members of this association, and we are proud
8 today to have had the honor of doing that very same
9 service for him.

10 JUDGE SIMANEK: The Court orders the words of
11 Keith and Bill Gerard be spread upon the record of the
12 Racine County Circuit Court.

13 MR. MURATORE: I'll ask now that Judge Simanek
14 give the tribute for Dexter Black.

15 JUDGE SIMANEK: Relatives and friends of Dexter
16 Black, members of the Racine County Bar Association,
17 ladies and gentlemen:

18 I have the distinct honor of reading the eulogy
19 prepared for Dexter Black by Harley Brown and the eulogy
20 prepared by Judge Dennis Barry, neither of whom are able
21 to be here today.

22 Harley Brown writes, "One of the best tributes
23 I can pay to Dexter is he was one hell of a good lawyer.
24 This comes from one who practiced mostly with him for
25 thirty-two years. Law partnerships are usually

1 transitory, but Dexter and I had no written partnership
2 agreement, shared everything 50/50, and the relationship
3 continued from 1960 to his untimely death in 1992. So I
4 know whereof I speak when I say he was one hell of a good
5 lawyer in every aspect of his chosen profession.

6 "Dexter had tremendous communication skills,
7 whether he was advising a client, interviewing a witness,
8 persuading a jury, or making an argument to the Court.
9 He had a wide range of experience in criminal law, civil
10 cases, administrative matters, and business law. He was
11 a good legal scholar, a hard worker, and devoted to his
12 client's cause. He was truly a professional.

13 "Being a good lawyer is a great tribute to
14 which we all aspire, but Dexter is entitled to other
15 tributes as well. He was also a successful banker. He
16 was one of the founders and organizers of the Bank of
17 Elmwood. He served that bank in both local and state
18 matters for about thirty years.

19 "Furthermore, Dexter served Carthage College
20 with great distinction. He joined the Carthage Board of
21 Trustees in 1961 and was a valuable resource in the
22 relocation effort of the college. In addition to his
23 fourteen years as chairman of the board, Dexter served as
24 secretary and first vice president. He played a pivotal
25 role in two major fund-raising efforts, and his counsel

1 had a significant role in the approval of the five-year
2 strategic plan for the college. He also oversaw the
3 search that brought the school's present president, F.
4 Gregory Campbell, to the school in 1987 from the
5 University of Chicago.

6 "During World War II, Dexter was in the Air
7 Force as a tail gunner on B-17s. He served with great
8 distinction in the European Theater of the war.

9 "Dexter D. Black was born in Racine on
10 March 10, 1926. He spent his entire early life in Racine
11 and was educated at the University of Wisconsin and then
12 Marquette Law School. He married Nancy L. Johnson in
13 1953. He was a resident of the Racine and Burlington
14 areas for the past thirty years. He also was the
15 district attorney for Racine for six years.

16 "He was a member of Atonement Lutheran Church
17 in Racine and Cross Lutheran Church in Burlington. He
18 was a member of the State Bar Association and the
19 American Association of Trial Lawyers, chairman of the
20 board for Lincoln Lutheran Home in Racine. He was on the
21 board of directors at the Bank of Elmwood and the Racine
22 Humane Society, and many other organizations.

23 "He is survived by his wife, Nancy L. Black;
24 two daughters and sons-in-law, Monty Ann, married to
25 Thomas Bolfert, Molly Jean, married to Richard Treiber;

1 two granddaughters, Julia Marie and Tiffany Anne Treiber;
2 one sister, Nancy, married to James Kark; sister-in-law,
3 Phyllis Slaasted; one brother-in-law, Martin Pingle; and
4 nieces and nephews.

5 "Dexter left a host of friends in all of the
6 many activities in which he was engaged. He was a
7 quality person who will be remembered, admired, and
8 missed by his many colleagues, his friends, and
9 especially by his family."

10 Judge Dennis Barry then writes, "I would like
11 to add a couple of memories I have of Dexter. As noted,
12 he was a member of the Atonement Lutheran Church in
13 Racine and taught Sunday school there many years ago. I
14 was one of his students. That was also during the time
15 he was District Attorney for Racine County.

16 "One of my most vivid childhood memories is
17 when Dexter took our Sunday school class on a tour of the
18 Racine County Courthouse. I was awestruck. Dexter
19 showed us the District Attorney's Office, some of the
20 beautiful wood paneled courtrooms, the sheriff's
21 department, including the jail, which was located there
22 at the time, as well as the panoramic view of Racine
23 which could be seen from the very top of the courthouse.

24 "I often commented to Dexter in later years
25 that that particular courthouse tour left a much larger

1 impression than he ever might have imagined.

2 "I also remember Dexter as a friend of my
3 dad's. They were on the church council together, fished
4 together, and socialized together. As a kid I always
5 remember Dexter's kind and gentle manner. Years later,
6 as I observed him as a practicing attorney, I still
7 admired the same soft-spoken demeanor that could very
8 effectively and persuasively make whatever point he
9 wished to make.

10 "I share the thoughts expressed by Harley
11 Brown's excellent memorial to Dexter Black, and I ask
12 that these words be spread upon the records of the Racine
13 County Circuit Court."

14 And so ordered.

15 MR. MURATORE: Thank you, Judge Simanek.

16 I now would like to introduce to you Attorney
17 Patrick M. Lloyd of Burlington, Wisconsin, who will give
18 the memorial tribute for Thomas Corbett.

19 MR. LLOYD: Your Honor, members of the bench,
20 members of the Bar, friends and families of the judges
21 and attorneys we are memorializing today, Judge Thomas
22 Corbett died on May 10, 1995, in the Veteran's Home in
23 King, Wisconsin, at the age of 80.

24 Thomas Patrick Corbett was born in Marinette,
25 Wisconsin, September 15, 1914, the youngest child born to

1 William J. and Georgine Allen Corbett. Tom Corbett and
2 his family moved to Racine in 1918. He graduated from
3 St. Rose Catholic Grade School here in Racine and
4 St. Catherine's High School. He then attended Marquette
5 University and received his bachelor's degree there and
6 graduated from the law school of Marquette in 1939. The
7 following year Tom was elected to the Assembly of the
8 State of Wisconsin and served there in 1941, 1942, until
9 he entered the service.

10 Tom Corbett married the former Lucille Tarro on
11 September 16, 1942, in St. Rose Catholic Church in
12 Racine. His wife was commonly known to many of us as
13 Terry. They have two children, Tom, who now resides in
14 Van Buren, Missouri, and Patti, who now resides in
15 Bellevue, Nebraska. Tom and Terry were blessed with
16 three grandchildren.

17 Tom served his country as a lieutenant in the
18 Navy from 1943 until 1945. When he was discharged from
19 the Navy in 1945, he practiced law in Racine until 1949.
20 He was then appointed City Attorney by the City Council
21 of Racine, and he was unanimously reappointed for three
22 additional terms and thus served as the City Attorney of
23 the City of Racine for thirteen years.

24 When the court system for Racine County was
25 reorganized in 1961 and two additional county judgeships

1 or positions were added, Tom and Judge John Ahlgrimm were
2 elected to fill those two positions. Tom was most
3 incremental in establishing the court in the City of
4 Burlington to serve the people west of the "I," and that
5 court system has continued to expand since that time for
6 the services of the citizens of the western end of the
7 county.

8 Tom very much enjoyed being present in the
9 court in Burlington. When the court system was again
10 reorganized and the county judgeship positions eliminated
11 and we had all circuit judges, Tom was elected as a
12 circuit judge and continued to serve as circuit judge in
13 Racine County until 1980. Judge Corbett organized the
14 Family Court Advisory Board and was an active officer on
15 the State Board of Criminal Judges.

16 Judge Corbett was a comforting figure on the
17 bench, made witnesses feel at ease, and had a great
18 concern for jurors and other participants in the court
19 system. I think he made everybody feel comfortable.

20 At the time of Judge Corbett's death, the
21 Racine Journal Times quoted one veteran Racine attorney
22 commenting on Judge Corbett's retirement. "He was as
23 fair as any person could be. That was one of his
24 greatest qualities. He always did what he thought was
25 right. Fairness was an obsession with him." And I think

1 most of us who practiced before Judge Corbett can
2 personally vouch for that assessment.

3 Following his retirement as circuit judge in
4 Racine County, Tom served as a reserve judge both in this
5 area and in the area of Waushara County. Tom and his
6 wife purchased a home in Wild Rose, Wisconsin, after his
7 retirement but continued to have his main residence here
8 in Racine until 1987 when they made their permanent
9 residence in Wild Rose.

10 Thomas a past commander of the VFW Post in
11 Racine, Post 1319, and past Grand Knight of the Knights
12 of Columbus Council 697. He was active in the Danish
13 Brotherhood in Racine.

14 And as I look and we look back at the career of
15 Judge Corbett as city attorney and as county and circuit
16 judge, we find that he spent in public service four
17 decades. He was very dedicated in that period of time to
18 his duties as city attorney, to his profession as an
19 attorney, and to his responsibilities as a judge.

20 Tom Corbett was a very close friend of mine,
21 and I'm honored to have this day to be here to present
22 this memorial to him.

23 On behalf of the Racine County Bar Association,
24 I request this memorial be placed of record of the court
25 and a copy be made available to his wife, Terry.

1 Thank you very much.

2 JUDGE SIMANEK: So ordered.

3 MR. MURATORE: Thank you, Pat.

4 I now wish to introduce to you Attorney James
5 J. Fetek, who will give the memorial tribute to Judge
6 Francis H. Wendt.

7 MR. FETEK: Judge Simanek, members of the
8 Racine County judiciary, Mrs. Wendt, members of the Wendt
9 family, Racine County Bar Association members, and
10 friends:

11 Francis H. Wendt was born in the Town of
12 Yorkville here in Racine County on March 8, 1899, the son
13 of Frank and Katherine Wendt, an area farm family of
14 seven children.

15 After the completion of high school in
16 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, he assisted his father in the
17 operation of the Wendt farm until age 21. He
18 subsequently enrolled in the University of Wisconsin Law
19 School at Madison but was forced to leave school and
20 return home to the Racine community in 1925 to assist his
21 father in the operation of the Wendt farm when his father
22 became ill.

23 After the cessation of farm operations and the
24 sale of the Wendt farm the following year, he obtained
25 employment as a collector and process server in the

1 Racine law firm of Simmons, Walker, Wratten & Sporer, a
2 firm that is undoubtedly remembered by a number of you
3 who had been practicing at least some 25 or 30 years, but
4 was a firm located here on 6th Street, Lake, I believe,
5 and 6th Street, and at that time had among its clients
6 many of the early Racine industries.

7 The late Charles Wratten, who was a member of
8 the firm, a firm partner, realized the ability and
9 intellect of Francis Wendt and urged him to continue the
10 study of law at the law firm for preparation for the
11 taking of the Wisconsin State Bar exam, which at that
12 time was given semiannually and could be taken regardless
13 of whether one completed law school.

14 The firm had a very large law library which was
15 made available for his use and study during the next
16 several years while still employed by the firm.

17 In 1929 Francis Wendt took and passed the
18 Wisconsin State Bar exam on his very first attempt
19 without ever having completed law school.

20 Upon securing his license to practice law, he
21 opened an office for the general practice of law in 1929
22 at the former Baker Building, located east and across the
23 street from Monument Square here in Racine. He practiced
24 and maintained his practice in the general practice of
25 law until his election as a county court judge in 1956.

1 Additionally, from 1930 through 1956 he served as a
2 Racine County court commissioner.

3 The year in which he commenced his practice of
4 law, 1929, coincided with the beginning of the Depression
5 Era, a period of considerable legal work and very little
6 income for attorneys, very little payment for the efforts
7 of an attorney.

8 In 1943 Francis Wendt was elected mayor of the
9 City of Racine, an office which initially he believed to
10 be part time. He was re-elected on two occasions and
11 served until 1949.

12 Soon after his initial election, then-Mayor
13 Wendt discovered that World War II had made what was to
14 be a part-time office, in fact, full time.

15 The war had created numerous problems,
16 including an immediate war production industrial
17 expansion, the rationing of gasoline and meat products,
18 utility conservation problems, and a growing labor unrest
19 in the Racine community.

20 The difficulties of his office as mayor did not
21 cease at the war's end since Racine community found
22 itself in postwar expansion problems.

23 Mayor Wendt was one who took on a hands-on
24 approach to the community problems.

25 The accomplishments of his office while mayor

1 were many.

2 An adoption of the comprehensive zone
3 ordinance.

4 The installation of over 75,000 feet of storm
5 and sanitary sewers, which equates to over fifteen
6 miles.

7 An expansion of the water distribution system
8 of the city.

9 The extension of natural gas to the City of
10 Racine from the State of Illinois.

11 The establishment of the University of
12 Wisconsin-Racine, a two-year college formerly located in
13 the McMynn Building, which ultimately, together with the
14 Kenosha extension division, became Parkside College,
15 University of Wisconsin-Parkside as we know it.

16 And the establishment of a city youth council,
17 which was instrumental in expanding recreational
18 activities in the area.

19 In 1949, at the expiration of his third term,
20 he returned to full-time law practice until his election
21 as a county judge for Racine County, where he served
22 continuously until 1969 when he retired at age 70. The
23 county court to which Judge Wendt was elected was the
24 probate court for Racine County. It was then one of
25 three record branch courts, the other two being the

1 circuit court, which was presided over by Judge Goodland,
2 and the municipal court, which was then presided over by
3 Judge DuRocher.

4 Judge Wendt was considered a practical,
5 common-sense judge whose office and time was available to
6 everyone, lawyers and the community alike.

7 It was during his tenure in office that Judge
8 Wendt expanded his interest in the problems of the
9 mentally ill, a group that he often referred to as the
10 "forgotten people."

11 In 1957 he was instrumental in the organization
12 of the Racine County Mental Health Organization or
13 Association. In 1963 he drafted a manual for
14 hospitalization procedures for the mentally ill, a manual
15 which was used in the State of Wisconsin by many
16 attorneys and judges for many years.

17 During 1969 and 1970 he served as Racine County
18 Public Administrator, which was a part-time position
19 representing the Wisconsin Department of Revenue in
20 inheritance tax matters and also administering the
21 estates of decedents who had unknown heirs.

22 Until his retirement at age 81, Judge Wendt
23 also served as an active reserve judge in the State of
24 Wisconsin in ten different counties, primarily in
25 Waukesha County.

1 The organizations to which Judge Wendt belonged
2 or with which he actively served were numerous and
3 included the following:

4 The Racine County Bar Association, of which he
5 was a past president.

6 The American and Wisconsin Bar Associations.

7 The Wisconsin State Judicial Ethics Committee.

8 The State Advisory Committee on the Mental
9 Health Act.

10 The State Board of Professional
11 Responsibility.

12 The Racine City Library Board, of which he also
13 served as a former president.

14 The Racine Council on Alcoholism, of which he
15 was an organizer.

16 The Board of Trustees of the Racine County
17 Institutions.

18 The St. Luke's Hospital Board of Trustees.

19 The Salvation Army Advisory Board here in
20 Racine.

21 The Racine Community Chest Board of Directors.

22 The Wisconsin and Racine Historical Societies.

23 The Racine County Boy Scouts Council.

24 The Wisconsin Republican Party State Central
25 Committee.

1 The Theresa and Elizabeth Home, a retirement
2 home for the elderly here in Racine.

3 The Wisconsin Association of County
4 Institutions, of which he was a vice president from 1955
5 to 1956.

6 The Racine County Mental Health Organization or
7 Association, of which he was the primary organizer.

8 The Wisconsin Mental Health Association, of
9 which he was an executive board member from 1960 through
10 1965.

11 The Racine YMCA.

12 The Racine Optimist Club.

13 The Racine Rotary Club.

14 The Masonic Order and related Shriner
15 organizations.

16 The First Church Christ, Scientist at Racine,
17 Wisconsin.

18 The civic activities of Francis Wendt resulted
19 in a 1946 listing in Who's Who In America, the 1958 VFW
20 Man of the Year civic service award, and in 1958 a
21 designation by the Racine County Mental Health
22 Association as the Mental Health Citizen of the Year.

23 Judge Wendt and his wife, Della, who's present
24 here today and an active Racine area community leader,
25 were firm believers in the necessity of education, which

1 is evidenced by the fact that their son John received a
2 Ph.D. in nuclear engineering from the University of
3 Wisconsin-Madison and their son Richard received a Ph.D.
4 in chemistry from the same university.

5 Francis Wendt was a person who lived a full and
6 rewarding life. His dedication and service to the Racine
7 community, in my opinion, will be virtually impossible to
8 match.

9 Judge Wendt passed away at Racine, Wisconsin,
10 on August 22, 1994, at an alert age of 95.

11 He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Della
12 Wendt; a son, John F. Wendt, presently the director of
13 Von Karmen Institute at Brussels, Belgium; a son, Richard
14 H. Wendt, presently a research director with the Proctor
15 & Gamble Company in Cincinnati, Ohio; five grandchildren
16 and four great-grandchildren.

17 May it please the Court, I would ask that these
18 comments be spread upon the permanent records of the
19 circuit court.

20 JUDGE SIMANEK: So ordered.

21 Mr. Muratore, the president of the Bar
22 Association, will have some closing comments.

23 Mr. Muratore.

24 MR. MURATORE: Thank you, Your Honor. Thank
25 you.

1 In closing, I would like to say to you that
2 it's not a small coincidence that 33 delegates of the 55
3 delegates at the original constitutional convention,
4 which was held in Philadelphia in May of 1787, were
5 lawyers.

6 Those lawyers at that time played a substantial
7 role in the formation, the formulating of the
8 Constitution of the United States and also conditioned
9 their approval of that Constitution on the basis that
10 certain specific individual rights would be added to the
11 Constitution at a later time, and we've come to know
12 those amendments of the Constitution that were added at
13 their insistence as the Bill of Rights. We've come to
14 cherish the contents of the Bill of Rights, and sometimes
15 we have taken for granted the effect that they have had
16 in preserving our lives in America the way that they
17 are.

18 Thomas Jefferson, a lawyer and author of the
19 Declaration of Independence and the third president of
20 the United States, in his inaugural address, which he
21 gave in March of 1801, expressed his concern that the
22 same tyrannical mistakes that were made by the European
23 governments should not be made in America in this new
24 nation.

25 In his inaugural address he said, and pardon me

1 if I quote directly to be accurate, a wise and frugal
2 government which shall restrain men from injuring one
3 another which shall leave them otherwise free to regulate
4 their own pursuits of industry and improvement is the sum
5 of good government and is necessary.

6 Jefferson went on to say, these principles from
7 the bright constellation which has gone before us and
8 guided our steps through an age of revolution and
9 reformation must be preserved, and he referred to them
10 specifically. Equal and exact justice to all men of
11 whatever state or persuasion, religious or political,
12 freedom of religion, freedom of the press, freedom of a
13 person under the protection of habeas corpus and the
14 trial by jurors impartially selected. They should be the
15 creed of our political faith.

16 Jefferson said, the text of civil instruction,
17 the touchstone by which we judge the services of those we
18 trust and should we wander from them, let us hasten to
19 retrace our steps and redeem the road which leads to
20 peace, liberty, and safety.

21 During their lives, the lawyers who we paid
22 tribute to here today in one way or another promoted and
23 supported the principles that Jefferson made reference
24 to. We are proud of those lawyers for that.

25 In closing, I wish to thank all of you for

1 attending and being a part of this memorial tribute.

2 Thank you.

3 JUDGE SIMANEK: Thank you, Mr. Muratore.

4 I also wish on behalf of all judges of Racine
5 County to thank you for attending and paying tribute to
6 those who have gone before us. Thank you very much.

7 Court now stands adjourned.

8 (The memorial service concluded at 11:57 a.m.)

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1 STATE OF WISCONSIN)
2 COUNTY OF RACINE)

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4 I, ROBIN G. HARMSSEN, RPR, Official Circuit Court
5 Reporter, do hereby certify that I reported the foregoing
6 matter and that the foregoing transcript, reduced to
7 typewriting by computer-aided transcription, consisting
8 of 31 pages inclusive, is a true and correct transcript
9 of the proceedings had as contained in my stenographic
10 notes.

11 Dated at Racine, Wisconsin, this 3rd day of May,
12 1996.

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14
15 Robin G. Harmsen
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20 The foregoing certification of this transcript
21 does not apply to any reproduction of the same by any
22 means without an original ink signature of the certifying
23 reporter.

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