

The Sandbar

**SPECIAL EDITION* Service of Remembrance
Newsletter of the New London County Bar Association*



Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions

MEDITATION XVII. NUNC LENTO SONITU DICUNT, MORIERIS.

Now this bell tolling softly for another,
says to me, Thou must die.

PERCHANCE he for whom this bell tolls may be so ill as that he knows not it tolls for him. And perchance I may think myself so much better than I am, as that they who are about me, and see my state, may have caused it to toll for me, and I know not that. The church is catholic, universal, so are all her actions; all that she does, belongs to all. When she baptizes a child, that action concerns me; for that child is thereby connected to that head which is my head too, and ingrafted into that body, whereof I am a member. And when she buries a man, that action concerns me; all mankind is of one author, and is one volume; when one man dies, one chapter is not torn out of the book, but translated into a better language; and every chapter must be so translated; God employs several translators; some pieces are translated by age, some by sickness, some by war, some by justice; but God's hand is in every translation, and his hand shall bind up all our scattered leaves again, for that library where every book shall lie open to one another; as therefore the bell that rings to a sermon, calls not upon the preacher only, but upon the congregation to come; so this bell calls us all: but how much more me, who am brought so near the door by this sickness.

There was a contention as far as a suit (in which, piety and dignity, religion and estimation, were mingled) which of the religious orders should ring to prayers first in the morning; and it was determined, that they should ring first that rose earliest. If we understand aright the dignity of this bell, that tolls for our evening prayer, we would be glad to make it ours, by rising early, in that application, that it might be ours as well as his, whose indeed it is. The bell doth toll for him, that thinks it doth; and though it intermit again, yet from that minute, that that occasion wrought upon him, he is united to God. Who casts not up his eye to the sun when it rises? But who takes off his eye from a comet, when that breaks out? who bends not his ear to any bell, which upon any occasion rings? But who can remove it from that bell, which is passing a piece of himself out of this world?

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

Neither can we call this a begging of misery, or a borrowing of misery, as though we were not miserable enough of ourselves, but must fetch in more from the next house, in taking upon us the misery of our neighbors. Truly it were an excusable covetousness if we did; for affliction is a treasure, and scarce any man hath enough of it. No man hath affliction enough, that is not matured and ripened by it, and made fit for God by that affliction. If a man carry treasure in bullion or in a wedge of gold, and have none coined into current moneys, his treasure will not defray him as he travels. Tribulation is treasure in the nature of it, but it is not current money in the use of it, except we get nearer and nearer our home, heaven, by it. Another may be sick too, and sick to death, and this affliction may lie in his bowels, as gold in a mine, and be of no use to him; but this bell that tells me of his affliction, digs out, and applies that gold to me: if by this consideration of another's danger, I take mine own into contemplation, and so secure myself, by making my recourse to my God, who is our only security.

Opening Remarks by The Honorable Hillary B. Strackbein, Presiding Judge

Dear Colleagues and Family and Friends:

First let me echo the remarks of Attorney Clark-the service of remembrance has always been an integral part of the fabric of our profession. It has always been a time to get together with our colleagues to honor the members of our profession who have passed away in the previous year. This would be my fifth year as Administrative Judge and my fifth year with the honor of presiding over the service.

Who could have predicted a worldwide pandemic which has caused such chaos and such disruption in what used to be our normal lives.

It has been brought to my attention that not since the New London courthouse was drafted into duty as a temporary hospital during the yellow fever pandemic of 1798 has a disease disrupted our daily work.

Because of the pandemic it is simply not prudent to have the service of remembrance as we have before for so many years. Hopefully we will again be able to meet together in the future post-pandemic world.

This written version of the service is not a perfect substitute but we could not let the year go by without acknowledging our colleagues.

This year we honor six exceptional colleagues-three judges and three lawyers.

Hon. Seymour Hendel
Hon. Antoinette Dupont Cretella
Hon. Joseph Q. Koletsky
Robert Cary, Esq.
David Mandell, Esq.
James "Jerry" Murphy, Esq.

This year we will get a glimpse into the lives of these extraordinary colleagues. It is true that we all strive to make a difference in the lives of others. Our profession is noble and allows us to do that very thing. When we lose our colleagues we lose a part of ourselves. I recently saw a quote that said, " Those we love never truly leave us. There are things death cannot touch." As long as we are here those who have left us will always be remembered.

As you read the remarks of the friends and relatives of the departed please realize that reflecting on their lives is also reflecting on our own. All of our lives will end but the way we choose to live and the way we stay alive in the memories of others makes the grand statement that we were here, that we made a difference. These men and this woman made a difference.

Thank you for allowing me to be a part of this unusual but very important service. Again it has been my honor.

Robert J. "Rob" Cary, Jr., Esq.

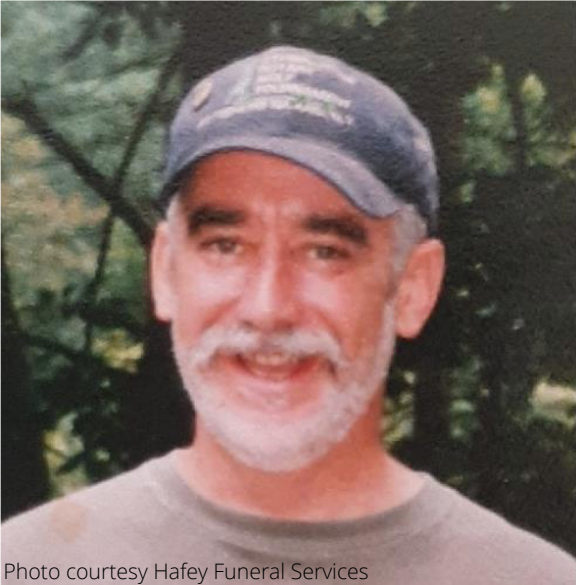


Photo courtesy Hafey Funeral Services

A Remembrance for Robert J. Cary, Jr. by Michael A. Blanchard

Robert "Rob" J. Cary, Jr. died on January 27, 2020 at the age of 66.

Rob grew up in Springfield, Ma, attending local schools and graduating from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. He married Marian Balestri in 1978, and they both commenced service for the Peace Corps in Fiji. Upon return from that service, Rob and Marian moved to Stonington, CT. Rob graduated from the University of Connecticut school of Law in 1986, the same year his son August (Augie) was born. Augie was followed by Georgia (GiGi) who was born in 1990. Rob's legal career in CT commenced in New London County, where he practiced for over two decades; mostly with Brown Jacobson in Norwich, CT and with Ellen Brown, at Brown & Cary in Groton from 2001. While Rob may have left the Peace Corps, the principles and ideals of that organization never left Rob. Rob's legal practice, while initially diversified, gravitated toward family law, where he found his legal abilities and people skills meshed well with assisting parties through the difficulties of divorce. He was a devoted advocate for his clients, and he always put them in the best position possible for a fair resolution of their cases. He was a true professional. I always enjoyed talking with Rob about files, bouncing ideas off of each other, trying to get each other's perspective on the cases or issues. The best part of having these meetings was that they would inevitably result in Rob recounting various interesting, and often comical experiences from his childhood, the Peace Corps and his children. Rob was well read, quick witted, and best of all a diehard Red Sox fan.

In 2011, Rob went to rehabilitation for his alcohol addiction and left the practice that he and Ellen Brown maintained. I understand he maintained sobriety until his death. And while Rob may have left practicing law, he continued to use his legal knowledge and mentoring ability to help others in recovery. He also made the trek from Springfield to the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation Tribal court as the prosecutor for the Tribe in their child protection court, protecting the Tribe's children while assisting the families to hopefully reunite and move forward. Rob would drive his motorcycle from Springfield to the Court year round. It was always a sight to see Rob in the office, peeling off his bright yellow rain suit as we began to discuss a file.

According to his obituary, Rob suffered from physical and mental health issues over the years, and began quietly isolating himself from his family. in his eulogy it was said that Rob knew how to help other people, but he wasn't very good at helping himself. His funeral was well attended, with many of the people he helped through the years honoring the life of someone who made a difference in their lives. A person who had faith in them when they didn't have faith in themselves. In the end, Rob stayed true to his Peace Corps roots, helping those less fortunate than himself.

Hon. Antoinette "Billie" Loiacono Dupont Cretella



A Remembrance for the Honorable Antoinette Loiacono Dupont Cretella by Theresa A. Ferryman

I had the privilege to serve as law clerk to Chief Judge Antoinette Dupont during the 1988-1989 term of the Connecticut Appellate Court and am honored to submit this remembrance. Judge Dupont was a tour de force, trampling conventions that operated as barriers to most women of the time. She was born in New York City, the oldest child of Albert and Helen Utano Loiacano, but was a New Londoner from early on, having relocated with her family when she was an infant. All four of her grandparents were from Italy. Her paternal grandparents, Vincent and Antonina Loiacano, emigrated from Sicily and settled in New London in the 1890s, where Vincent was a cobbler and later a successful real estate developer and builder. Judge Dupont took great pride in her Italian heritage. Early in her career on the bench, she encountered a venire woman who shared with the court her "concern" over the criminal defendants' Italian surnames. The unfortunate venire person was discharged abruptly accompanied by a cutting instruction to never return. "The poor woman didn't know that Dupont is my married name," is how the judge summed up the incident.

The Loiacano family was well known in New London— her two uncles were physicians and her father and eventually her two brothers, Vincent and Anthony, were pharmacists who operated pharmacies at numerous locations in New London and Groton. As a teenager, she worked in her father's pharmacy on Broad Street, often at the soda fountain or delivering prescriptions. She attended local grammar schools and graduated from the all-girls Williams Memorial Institute in 1946 as president of her class. She went on to Pembroke College at Brown University, the all-female counterpart at the time to Brown. Upon graduation from Brown, where she majored in political science, Judge Dupont applied to and was accepted at Harvard Law School as part of the second class to admit women. She was one of twelve women among about seven hundred men and graduated Harvard Law in 1954. She kept close ties throughout her life to the other women in her Harvard class.

Judge Dupont embarked upon her legal career at a time when most firms were openly and unapologetically resistant to the idea of a female lawyer. She recounted being summarily dismissed many times from waiting rooms and lobbies once it became clear to the interviewer that the applicant was female. On one occasion the interviewer ended the meeting upon determining to his chagrin that the applicant was "a woman, an Italian, and a Catholic." Nevertheless, she persisted and landed her first job as co-counsel to a somewhat obscure commission under President Eisenhower studying the application of federal law to the Virgin Islands.

In 1955, her daughter Ellen was born and the family moved to New York City where she juggled motherhood, a position in a law firm on Wall Street, and a daily commute on the Staten Island Ferry. The family returned to New London and she went into private practice, practicing with Suisman, Shapiro, et al and then on her own. Sources differ as to whether she or Marilynne Graboyes Wool was the first woman admitted to practice in New London County, if she was not the first then she was the second. Her children Antonia and William were born during this period. She combined motherhood and her legal practice with aplomb, reportedly working on files from her hospital bed after William arrived. She was a lifelong Democrat who served on the New London School Board, acted as a campaign manager for Ruby Turner Morris (New London's first woman mayor) and hosted legendary non-partisan election night parties.

In 1977, Governor Ella Grasso appointed her to the Superior Court bench. Six years later, Governor Thomas O'Neill elevated her to the Appellate Court where she was one of the original five Judges, a year later she was appointed Chief Judge, serving in that role from 1984 to 1997 when she took senior status. Her time on the bench was a litany of achievements, accolades, and triumphs far too long to list here. She was known for her love of legal research, a deep sense of fairness and a natural talent for administration. She was beloved at the Appellate Court where she promoted collegiality above all else. Her instinct was to build consensus rather than discord. She served as one of the Chairmen of the Task Force on Gender Bias in the Connecticut Courts. As in all things, her views on gender issues were nuanced and did not adhere to a strict orthodoxy. She often spoke of the value of the education she received at her all female alma maters and had great affection for the sisterhood that those settings promoted while recognizing that not everyone saw the issue the same way. During her tenure with the Task Force, she was asked to take part in a study of the question of whether a female chief judge would lead to the suppression of dissents in appellate decisions. She was not offended by the question and would query how the building of consensus and the suppression of dissent relate, where one ends and the other begins. She once said of herself that her favorite words were "I agree" and that statement is borne out by time spent with and around her. She did not value disagreement that sprung from ego, pettiness or anything less than honest differences of opinion that persisted after efforts to reconcile them. I think of that philosophy whenever I see her portrait that hangs in courtroom one of the New London courthouse.

I was not a peer, a colleague or even a friend of Judge Dupont. I was her law clerk who spent a year working under her supervision. As Chief Judge, she was afforded (or afflicted with) two clerks. She was always fair and reasonable with her clerks and had a great sense of fun. Every year a poster was created that depicted the cases left to complete in the term and there was great competition among the clerks to fill in the remaining spaces before the last week in July. The picnics for incoming and outgoing clerks that she hosted with her husband Judge Cretella were memorable as the two judges insisted (mistakenly) that every clerk could in fact get the volleyball over the net on a serve. She was flexible and adjusted to whatever challenges the term would bring. My fellow clerk and I provided her with a memorable year in that we each had baby girls born during the term – my co-clerk had twin girls. Judge Dupont would laugh and remark that three women at the bar had become six during the course of one term. She was generous with her time during the clerkship and her influence after clerks moved on. Hers was a career matched by few women but I recall her most as a mentor and a role model. I am certain that she remains an inspiration to all of her former clerks.

Hon. Seymour J. Hendel



Photo courtesy The Day

A Remembrance for the Honorable Seymour L. Hendel by Martin M. Rutchik

Judge Hendel closed his court on October 25, 2020, the day he passed away.

I am honored to be a part of a remembrance of the Honorable Seymour L. Hendel. Seymour and Pat have been close friends since I attended UConn at Fort Trumbull in New London in 1950. Pat and Seymour were a serious couple. The story goes, he carried her books in grammar school. They married at age 19 and I doubt they were ever apart until his illness in 2020. Their marriage lasted over 68 years. We had double dates and he loved to dance and so did I. The Lighthouse Inn was the place to go. In those days Pat was the driver and she continued to be the driver for as long as I knew them.

Seymour attended Yale undergrad school and Pat was at Connecticut College. The separation was too painful and they both enrolled in Columbia at New York, she at Barnard and he at Columbia. Seymour was admitted to Harvard Law School and received his law degree. After graduation he went to Boston, practicing with a major law firm, then back to New London where Seymour opened a practice with Larry Greenberg, a bright commercial lawyer.

Pat and Seymour were a true love story, they had three children, Douglas, Clifford and Caroline, all successful lawyers. They lived in the New London area in a dollhouse on a lot the size of a stamp and they would always add on more bedrooms upstairs and downstairs. I did not understand why they did not move to a large property with lawns and trees, etc. But then I realized that it was this love of family, home, that was the motivation for staying where they were and making this a home for their children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, and to have them as close as possible. If you build it, they will come, and they did.

Pat and Seymour travelled all over the world. Seymour was the organizer with the airline tickets, accommodations and Pat was the packer. They seemed to be packing all the time. Their travels took them to Vail and Okemo for skiing, to Alaska, Costa Rica and Europe. They loved to bike ride, enjoyed the UConn Women's basketball team, tickets to the opera, good food and good whisky. They were firm believers in exercise and worked out at local gyms.

The Hendel family was blessed with immigrant ancestors who came to America for a better life. Starting as peddlers, they knew that furniture, gas and oil, were the energy of the future. The family businesses thrived. Seymour's brother, Myron, ran the fuel and furniture business. Seymour did the law work and later their son Douglas, who went to Amherst and Northwestern Law, and Myron's son John, became part of management. Clifford went to Wesleyan and UConn law and has an international practice in Madrid, Spain. Caroline, after graduating from Yale Undergrad was determined to become a lawyer and she entered Harvard Law School. She strongly believed in women's rights and Seymour encouraged her and supported her in her endeavors. Seymour did the law work for the family business and I was called upon to handle their parking tickets and speeding violations.

My wife, Rona, became as close as I to Seymour and Pat. My wife described them as the Medici of New London. They gave back to the community. The Hendel plaque hangs in the Lyman Allyn Museum, L+M Hospital, Beth-El Synagogue and Emanuel Synagogue. They were supporters of the arts and music in New London county. Seymour was the first President of the Jewish Federation, important for its enhancement of the community and not just for members of the Jewish faith. Seymour was the first President of the Eastern Connecticut Symphony when they struggled to pay their conductor. Seymour was able to turn the financial situation around and as we all know it is a major art venue in eastern Connecticut. He interviewed prospective students who wanted to attend Columbia.

Judge Hendel was appointed a Superior Court judge by Governor Ella Grasso in 1978. He sat on civil and criminal cases and was known as a judge who could move matters that came before him. He was proud; rarely, if at all, was there an appeal from his decisions, and his positions were sustained. Judge Hendel was a frequent speaker at seminars and the Law Day program. In 2002, the New London County Bar Association presented Judge Hendel with its annual Liberty Bell award for the creation of the Connecticut Court visitation program in which students visit courts to learn about civil and criminal procedures. In 2007 the association commissioned a portrait of Hendel, which still hangs in Courtroom One of the original 1784 courthouse. He was a mentor for other judges. Hendel was known to speak quickly and you had to pay attention to be on the same channel.

His colleagues were steadfast in their respect for the Judge, his demeanor on the bench and his concern for the individuals coming before him. While he was a stern Judge who demanded the attorneys appearing before him to be prepared when he was faced with criticism, those same lawyers stood by him. Although we remember him as a superb administrator and one of our finest trial judges, his scholarship was such that had he sat on the Appellate or Supreme Court he would have ended his career as one of its most distinguished members.

As the headlines of the New London Day set forth, he was an amazing scholar. He was proud of serving as a judge and his demeanor was that of a jurist. Upon his retirement as a judge, he continued to serve as a trial referee and senior judge. The compensation for his role was limited; however, he realized this was a payback. Rather than seek a position with a major law firm he realized that his efforts minimized the outlay for a replacement judge. He was sensitive to retired judges seeking a new career.

Pat had her own career with the Continuing Education Program at Connecticut College. She ran for the Connecticut State House of Representatives and won and served several terms (helping to preserve the New London courthouse) and was on the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women and the Connecticut Citizens Ethics Advisory Board.

Judge Hendel has left his footprints in the sands of time.

Hon. Joseph Q. Koletsky

Photo courtesy The Day



A Remembrance for the Honorable Joseph Q. Koletsky by Timothy D. Bates

Joe Koletsky was a man of many talents, and he lived a full life. He was born in 1938 and raised in New Haven. He was a scholar and an athlete from early in life, being admitted to Yale University, where he eventually became a lead member of the swimming team. He excelled at the back stroke and held American records in that stroke for decades.

After graduating from Yale, he continued to Yale Law School. As a law student, he also worked as a resident assistant for the undergrad students. After law school, he passed the bar and relocated to Newport, RI, to attend Naval Officer Candidate School, graduating in December, 1962.

He then married his wife, Ann, on December 29th of that year, and they began a marriage that would last 58 years, until his death. Joe went on to serve in the Navy as a law specialist, prior to settling in Southeastern Connecticut to practice law, with the firm that would eventually become Copp, Koletsky, and Berall. After years of practicing law, Joe was nominated to become a Connecticut Superior Court judge. He held the position from 1985-2012, sitting for both civil and criminal cases.

I personally owe Joe Koletsky a lot. First of all, he is the one who gave me a job with Copp, Koletsky, and Berall in the very beginning of my legal career. After agreeing to an initial offer to become part of the law firm, I decided I would rather work in the mayor's office in New Haven; therefore, I had to renege on the job offer. However, after working in the mayor's office for a year's time, my wife and I decided that we did in fact want to settle back in Noank. So, I sent out my resumes once again, and lo and behold, the position I had been offered a year prior was still open. Joe called very quickly. When I answered the phone, he said "Are you going to show up this time?" I took this as a job offer, and I agreed, and went to work for Joe.

Joe was a good person to work for. He was always easy to talk to, and he was very available. He gave me plenty of discretion and trusted me with cases, but also gave more valuable guidance when needed. Within a couple of years, I was made a partner of the firm, and Joe was beginning to look at me as an equal.

While working for Joe, I did note certain proclivities. He had some habits that were a bit out of the ordinary. Joe had taken to playing cards at the Thames Club, and sometimes played video games down at the arcade in New London during the lunch hour. Allegedly he could play one round of Pac Man for 45 minutes on one quarter. This talent led to lunch often going longer than an hour. The secretaries would then have to call the Thames Club or arcade to make sure he knew about the appointments he had with clients waiting for him back at the office. It began to occur to me that Joe was a unique person. He knew the law, and he would grapple with it in his own way. This might include putting it out of his mind for a period of time and coming back to it, or pushing it aside until he was ready to deal with the issues. Using his frontal lobe to problem solve a game, and then later coming back to use it to tackle the tougher legal issues. As someone who likes to tackle work head on, this sometimes would boggle my mind, but it worked for Joe.

Joe loved spending time with Ann and their three daughters. They sailed on the water in the summer and skied in the winter. Sometimes, in the winter when he'd fallen a little behind in work, he would have to send them north for a day or two early without him, and then he would join them. But he was always happy when he got there with his family. His athleticism continued to shine on the ski slopes.

Joe also enjoyed traveling internationally, especially Italy, and he became fluent in Italian. Joe knew how to enjoy life and appreciate others. Joe's boisterous laugh and joy of life will be missed.

David E. Mandell, Esq.

A Remembrance for David E. Mandell by Lloyd L. Langhammer



I first met David and his brother Marc through their father Dr. Harvey Mandell who was an avid chess player. This was probably in the early 1970's. Later, long before I became a lawyer, I used to see them at Dr. Coric's annual New Year's eve party. From these meetings some forty plus years ago a long term friendship was developed.

David was a graduate of the University of Vermont and Western New England College of Law. He practiced with his brother Marc for as long as I have known them. He loved tennis, jogging and duck pin bowling. He was an avid UVM hockey fan and loved all University of Oklahoma sports.

David (and his brother Marc) had an active practice in Norwichtown. David was a quiet lawyer. David was the kind of lawyer that although you might only deal with him once or twice a year but he always laid out the welcome mat for those with whom he interacted. Our interactions were first about how things were in our respective lives and what else was going on in New London County, Connecticut or the World. After we had fully gotten caught up we then turned to the important business of our client's respective needs. His genial nature always made any interactions with him pleasant. We would often pick one another's brains on issues that perplexed the other. He had a sharp wit and always had something to offer.

He will be sorely missed by all those who knew him.

James "Jerry" J. Murphy, Jr., Esq.



A Remembrance for James J. Murphy, Jr. by the Honorable James J. Devine

Prior to taking the bench, I had the pleasure of working with Jerry Murphy for a period of twenty-five years at the Norwich law firm of Berberick, Murphy, Devine and Whitty, P.C. When Jerry passed on September 13, 2020, I lost a friend and former law partner, but the citizens of the State of Connecticut lost a dedicated public servant and a true American.

Photo courtesy Mystic Funeral Home

Jerry was born in Norwich, Connecticut and was educated at NFA and UConn and served our country as an Army Armor Lieutenant at Fort Knox. Upon his return from military duty, he enrolled in the night division at UConn law school in Hartford while employed full-time. He graduated and passed the bar in 1964. After practicing law at Lewis, Shields and Murphy as a part-time prosecutor, he left and started his own law firm in 1972 with Fred Berberick. I joined the firm in 1973, with Charlie Whitty joining shortly thereafter.

Jerry, his wife Barbara of sixty-two years, and their family resided in Franklin, Connecticut. While there, he was involved in local public service as a member of the Bozrah-Franklin VNA Board of Directors and the Franklin Board of Education. Jerry decided to run for state office and was elected to the state Senate and served from 1970 through 1984, with the last four years as President pro tempore under Governor William O'Neill.

After the termination of his Senate position, he deserved a rest from the rigors of traveling back and forth to Hartford while continuing his commercial and real estate law practice, but Jerry had other ideas. Because of the respect shown to him by Democrats and Republicans as a dedicated and trustworthy servant, he was appointed to the first Criminal Justice Commission of the State of Connecticut as its first chairman. He was considered to be a straight shooter with the intellect needed to perform the duties of this important position.

Jerry and Barbara later moved to Lord's Point, Stonington. While continuing his legal practice, he also performed additional public service. He served for fourteen years on the Connecticut Citing Counsel. He also served as chairman of the Stonington Board of Education.

Jerry's efforts while a state Senator brought many benefits to our area, unknown to many. Without his input, there would be no Norwich courthouse and no Norwich golf course. He knew how to work the political system for the benefit of his constituents. Seeing Jerry in action as President pro tempore at the Capital was a sight to behold. He would sit with his hands in his pants pockets while other senators argued the merits of their respective positions. Jerry taught me that the most important trait for a politician is to "know how to count," that is, "if you have the votes, you don't have to say anything." Jerry got so much done with little fanfare.

It is unfortunate today that our political system does not have more senators and representatives like Jerry, a person who would listen to the pros and cons of a debate and decide how to vote based upon the benefits to the public rather than party. If he was alive today, he would be worried about the challenges to the integrity of the voting system and tabulation, a cornerstone of our democracy. In addition, he would be concerned with political wrangling in Georgia over runoff Senate elections and the attempt of outside money to buy an outcome which may or may not be in the public's interest.

Closing Remarks by NLCBA President, Robert W. Clark

For as long as I can remember, everyone gathered on the first Thursday Family Short Calendar in December at the Norwich Superior Court to honor and remember those past members of the New London County Bar. It was an annual event where the large jury box would be filled with all of the Judges from not only New London County, but from all over the state. I can still see the long lines of Judges all in formal robes, marching in single file and filling up the jury box. The court room was packed so full that people would stand around the back of the courtroom, two to three people deep. Also present were Lawyers from all over the county who practice in all different areas of the law, and also there were family members, friends, children, and siblings of those who passed away.

The ceremony was always the same in that the court would be called into session and the presiding judge would make opening remarks from the bench. Next, a special poem was read aloud, typically by Attorney Matt Berger, and the family members of the members of the bar were introduced and spoke on behalf their loved ones. While many of the speeches and remembrances did center on past legal stories, they always contained insight into the lives of those who passed including family, friends, achievements outside the law, and other contributions to society. Also contained on the opening pages of this special edition, is the opening remarks of Judge Hilary Strackbein and the poem itself always read at the beginning of the service.

Prior to this service and for quite some time thereafter, and before the short calendar was called into session, attorneys, family members, and judges were all sharing stories and meeting up with old friends, people they hadn't seen for months and even years. This ceremony brought people together to not only celebrate those individuals who were lost but to also celebrate life and the law itself. On the positive side, how we celebrate those we lost this year is in writing and will be preserved and given to the families of those who passed. We intended to replicate what was a cherished time-honored tradition to past and present members of the bar. This is the best we can do to replicate what this service was like. However, we cannot replicate the meeting of all past friends, family, and the entire legal community that attended. It is very important that in future years, they will once again have this service in December at a hearing date scheduled with notice for all to attend, even if Short Calendar does not exist.

A special thank you to Attorney Matthew Berger, Lisa Southers and all who assisted in keeping the memory of those we lost alive with their heartfelt contributions and assistance in making this edition of the Sandbar a success. Hopefully, next year the judges will all once again make the effort to attend and fill up the jury box and all members of the New London County Bar will once again come out and attend in order to remember, celebrate, and honor those who are no longer with us. Be safe and see you all there next year.

