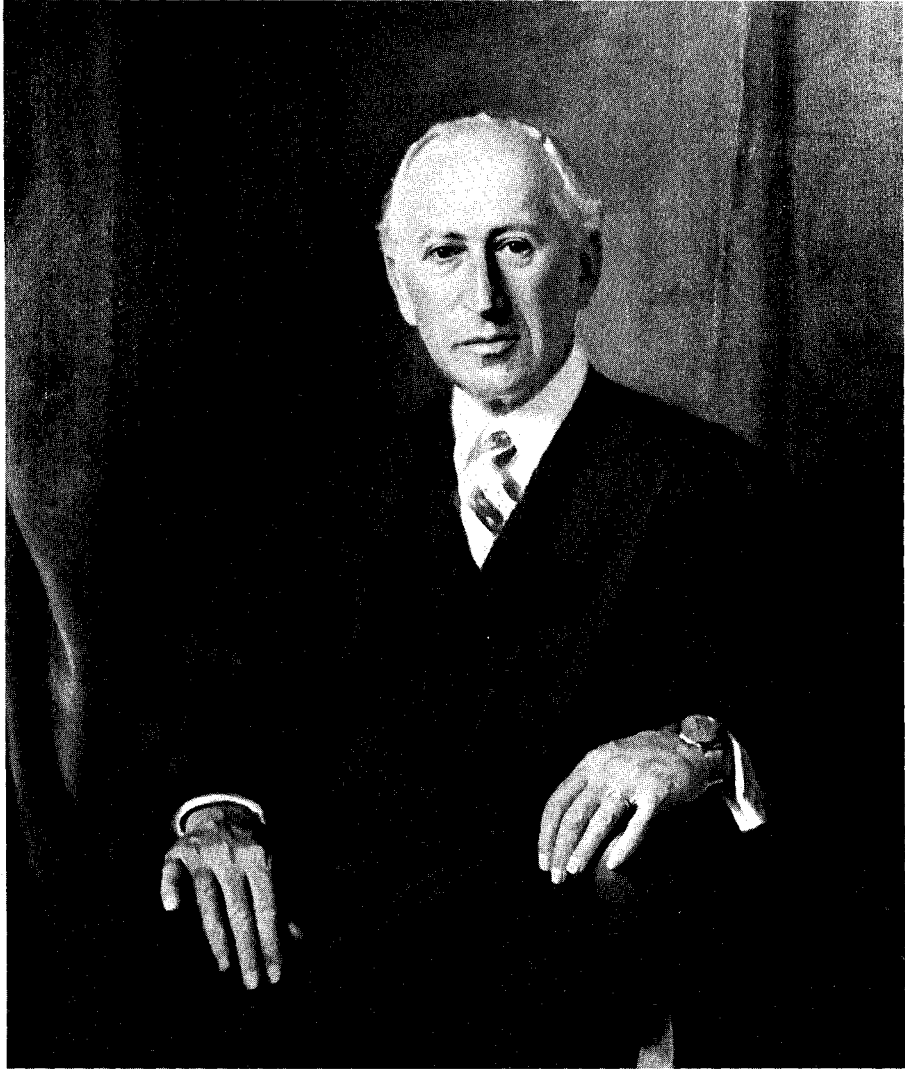


CHIEF JUSTICE JOSEPH WEINTRAUB

1908—1977



CHIEF JUSTICE JOSEPH WEINTRAUB

IN MEMORIAM
CHIEF JUSTICE JOSEPH WEINTRAUB*

It is difficult to realize that it was only a few short years ago when we sat in this very courtroom to receive, as the gift of the New Jersey State Bar Association, a quite wonderful portrait of Chief Justice Joseph Weintraub. It hangs here now as a continuing reminder of the spirit of that great judge who was of course with us on that very day. It will serve to inspire the judges who will be occupying this bench throughout many years to come.

The contour of history is always burdened by the infirmities of transitory human memory—and thus it is well to record by every means at hand, through artists and historians and also by speech, the recollection of a colleague and friend no longer with us. And so we come here today, indeed with a certain sadness, because we are human and feel the pain of separation. In a larger sense, however, we are translators, in a way, seeking to express and record for generations yet to come, the essentials of a quite rare human being.

When one considers the life and career of Joe Weintraub, images and superlatives come flooding to the surface of memory. As a lawyer one thinks of the term “superb.” As a man of principle the words “true” and “courageous” are predominant. To his dear departed parents and to his family and the magnificent Rhoda, one thinks of the word “beloved.” To the law student, “scholar-teacher.” To the Governor whom he served so well, “faithful counselor.” And as to this bench which he adorned for 17 golden years, there spills out a real profusion of words to describe that judicial life—“leadership,” “devotion,” “industry,” “integrity,” “scholarship”; and an unflagging commitment to the judicial system installed by the Constitution of 1947.

That system was led first by Arthur Vanderbilt and then by Chief Justice Weintraub. These two judicial giants, in their turn, secured for the people of New Jersey the excellence of a court system unrivaled in the United States.

We who follow in these busy years have in this example of industry, much inspiration and encouragement for the tasks at hand. It is true we are confronted by new problems and besieged by new de-

* Excerpts from the remarks of Chief Justice Richard J. Hughes at Memorial for Chief Justice Joseph Weintraub, Supreme Court of New Jersey, May 24, 1977.

mands. Discouraged from time to time, yet we find new strength, new inspiration, in recalling the driving courage of these forebears.

And so the story of Joe Weintraub is not really ended. Time and again, a hundred years from now, Justices of this bench will be quoting in their opinions the words of Chief Justice Weintraub. They will be cited, I think, in support of constitutional right and of duty, of fairness and justice to the poor and powerless, of the righting of long imbedded wrongs, of the breaking of mindless chains of past injustice, of a firmness in confronting corruption and crime,—and of an ever renewed vision of law as an effective instrument of justice.

I think if Chief Justice Weintraub had his preference, he would like this memorial to close by attributing to him the sentiments once expressed by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes:

Law is the business to which my life is devoted, and I should show less than devotion if I did not do what in me lies to improve it, and, when I perceive what seems to me the ideal of its future, if I hesitated to point it out and to press toward it with all my heart.

That always seemed to be Joe Weintraub's driving force; it seems most appropriate, on behalf of the present members of the Court, to repeat it now in his memory.