



THE HONORABLE FREDERICK B. LACEY

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A TRIBUTE TO JUDGE FREDERICK B. LACEY

*Honorable Clarkson S. Fisher**

On or about February 1, 1986, the Honorable Frederick B. Lacey retired from the bench as a United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey after fifteen years of service. The considerable talents and energy he brought to the bench of this district will be greatly missed, but every member of this court wishes him well in this renewal of his career as a distinguished lawyer.

Judge Lacey has in reality had many careers, most of them centered around his great love for the law and his dedication to public service. It is fascinating to chart his remarkable progress. After completing his schooling in the public schools of Newark, New Jersey, he attended Rutgers University and graduated with honors, attaining Phi Beta Kappa. He then entered Cornell University Law School and received a law degree with honors, was elected to the Order of the Coif honorary law society, and served as an editor of the law review.

Between these two phases of his education, Judge Lacey entered the United States Navy during World War II and served his country with distinction as a naval officer. He was separated from the service at the conclusion of the war as a Lieutenant Commander.

Entering private practice, he was associated with the law firms of Whitman, Ransom and Coulson of New York and McCarter and English in New Jersey from 1948 to 1953. In 1953, Judge Lacey became an Assistant United States Attorney in the District of New Jersey and served until 1955. During those years, he was involved in and tried many important criminal matters.

Returning to private practice in 1955, he joined the firm of Shanley and Fisher, where he established a reputation as an outstanding litigator. Public service then issued another summons. In 1969, he was offered and accepted the position of United States Attorney for the District of New Jersey. For the next two years, he relentlessly prosecuted a large number of cases involving organized crime and political corruption. The convictions devastated the regional and national crime families and brought down prominent offending politicians and officials.

In early 1971, President Nixon appointed him as a United

* Chief Judge, United States District Court, District of New Jersey.

States District Judge for the District of New Jersey. Since then, Judge Lacey has become an outstanding member of the judiciary, respected and admired by the bench and the Bar.

At the same time, it is a tribute to the talent and energy of the man that he also found time to sit on two extraordinary Federal courts as a Judge of the Temporary Emergency Court of Appeals from 1980 to the present, and as a Judge of the United States Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court from 1979 until 1985.

Incredibly, he also found time to impart his knowledge, learning, and experience to law students, serving as an Adjunct Professor at Seton Hall Law School and Rutgers School of Law. He has also lectured as a faculty member of the Federal Judicial Center and the National Judicial College, the New Jersey Institute for Continuing Legal Education, the American Law Institute, the Practising Law Institute, and the National Institute for Trial Advocacy.

Further, he has been a member of the Committee on Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure since 1976 and has chaired the committee since 1984. He is also a member of the Judicial Ethics Committee of the Judicial Conference of the United States, and holds or has held the following positions: Chairman, Executive Committee, National Conference of Federal Trial Judges; Judicial Member, Speedy Trial Act Planning Committee, District of New Jersey; Witness, National Commission of the Review of Antitrust Law and Procedures; Judicial Advisor, Seventh United Nations Congress on Crime, Milan, Italy, August-September 1985; and Invitee to the Canadian Judicial Conference, Winnipeg, Manitoba, July 1985.

Unfortunately, this paper is not large enough to list all of his accomplishments, but I can say from knowing Judge Lacey for many years that this man of such scope, energy, and talent can always find time to assist another judge, counsel young lawyers, be a wise and considerate advisor, and a good and kind husband and father.

Perhaps Judge Alvin B. Rubin, United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, sums it up best when he writes, "Judge Lacey is a splendid trial judge as well as a distinguished lawyer. Based on my own experience as a trial judge for eleven years and appellate judge for eight, I would rate Judge Lacey as one of the ten best district judges in the country. He brings intelligence and dedication to his every task."

As a colleague of this great trial judge, I concur wholeheartedly. I will miss him, but I know that I will always be able to call upon him for whatever assistance he can give to the court with full assurance that he will respond.