

## Justice Gary S. Stein

*Robert L. Clifford\**

As Justice Stein's retirement day approached, I found myself worrying about the post-retirement Gary Stein. I worried that, freed of the demands of judicial office, he would find himself with more time on his hands than was healthy. He is not the type to while away the hours in a rocker on the front porch, say, or to take up whittling. So when the Justice announced his decision to join a prominent law firm, I immediately took it upon myself to advise his new colleagues to smother him with assignments lest he turn into the office pest.

I mean, the man is a bear for work. On the Court we used to kid him that he was in reality a clone of Justice Sidney Schreiber, whom he succeeded. As did Justice Schreiber, he read *everything*, mastered the record, organized his thoughts, and then expressed his views on the legal issues with remarkable clarity and precision. And he could work up a head of steam over some of the Court's functions that I for one—and I suspect some others—found less than fascinating, such as administrative matters and the Rules conferences.

As I had hoped, Justice Stein found the time to do some teaching. As any of his judicial clerks will tell you, his vast knowledge of the law and creative approach to issues make him a natural.

Have I made him sound like a drone? I hope not. Gary Stein has an array of interests, the first of which is his family. He

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\* Associate Justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court, Retired. B.A., Lehigh University, 1947; LL.B., Duke University, 1950. Justice Clifford is Counsel to McElroy Deutsch & Mulvaney. He was nominated to the Supreme Court of New Jersey in 1973 by Governor William T. Cahill and served there for more than twenty-one years until his retirement in 1994. Prior to being named to the Court, he served in Governor Cahill's cabinet, first as Commissioner of Banking and Insurance, then as Commissioner of Insurance, and finally as Commissioner of Institutions and Agencies. Justice Clifford's public service capped a successful career in civil and criminal trial practice with several law firms. He is a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers, a Life Fellow of the American Bar Foundation, and a Fellow of the International Society of Barristers. He is past Chairman of the Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Judicial Conduct, past Chairman of the Supreme Court Professional Responsibility Rules Committee, and former member and Chair of the Council on Local Mandates.

travels. He is a fitness nut (he played tennis several days a week before going to chambers and works out on exercise equipment in his basement). As a matter of fact, I have acknowledged publicly my deep concern at having created a Frankenstein by introducing Gary Stein to the wondrous world of bicycling, whereupon he equipped himself with the finest in cycling gear and embarked on a riding program that includes an exhausting trek of however many miles are represented by his birthday. That is, we did sixty miles on his sixtieth birthday, sixty-five miles on his sixty-fifth (we talked a good game about completing seventy miles on his seventieth birthday on June 13, 2003, but did not quite make it).

I had never met Gary Stein before he joined the Court in 1985. We hit it off immediately. He has become a close and warm friend and will always remain so. He is the last of the hardy band of seven who sat together for almost ten years. It was one of the great privileges of my professional life to have served those years with Gary Stein.