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Volume 30 | Number 4

Article 1

6-1-1997

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Lawrence W. Crispo, *A Tribute to Richard A. Gadbois, Jr.*, 30 Loy. L.A. L. Rev. 1425 (1997).
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A TRIBUTE TO RICHARD A. GADBOIS, JR.

*Lawrence W. Crispo**

I first met Judge Richard A. Gadbois when I was assigned to his court for trial in the superior court about twenty years ago. I was struck by his imposing figure and striking image, accented by his judicial robe, dark hair, and black horn-rimmed glasses. I was very impressed by him. His demeanor would have been intimidating to a brand new lawyer. We spent several days on a moderately complicated land ownership case with various issues. As a result of his good offices, the case was ultimately resolved. His legal instincts and intuition assisted all parties in coming to an appropriate resolution.

I appeared before Dick with some regularity until he became a federal court judge. I commented to him upon his appointment that he should be careful to not become afflicted with “federal judge-itis.” Although I had only one matter before Judge Gadbois in the federal court, I had the occasion to interact with him professionally on various federal court committees and on a committee relating to civility issues. He maintained his good humor, humility, and compassion and never became afflicted with the federal judge-itis bug.

Judge Gadbois had an ability to importune people to do all sorts of good things. For example, he first asked me to participate in a Rutter Group panel discussing settlements—the earlier term for alternative dispute resolution. We spent a great deal of time interacting and preparing for that panel. By that time, I had already learned to appreciate his wry sense of humor. His insights in preparing for that panel helped to make me a better lawyer and a better presenter on the panel.

He then suggested that I submit my name for election as a lawyer representative to the Ninth Circuit Judicial Conference. We developed a close friendship and spent many hours together discussing law, religion, and philosophy. I learned much from him.

Dick was truly a scholar. One day we were talking about a

* Judge, Los Angeles County Superior Court.

discussion he had with an appellate judge. Since both that judge and Dick spoke Greek, the conversation changed from English to Greek. Dick commented to me about that meeting and said that he did not mind the judge speaking to him in Greek, but, he said, "It was bad Greek."

Everyone who knew Judge Gadbois has individual memories of him. Over the years he encouraged me to apply for a position on the bench. When I did apply some years later, I had lunch with him and told him that I had applied several months earlier. Dick chided me for not letting him know that I was going to apply. He thereafter wrote several letters to Governor Wilson and personally intervened with the governor on my behalf.

As I write these recollections, I glance on a shelf opposite my desk in chambers and warmly look at the picture of Dick swearing me in as a judge of the superior court.

The last time I saw Judge Gadbois, several weeks before his death, was when he, Judge Norman Shapiro, and I had lunch. Although he had, by that time, gone on to senior status with the court, he and we felt that he was "on the mend" and would be returning to active work on the court. Judge Shapiro recalled appearing before Dick as calendar deputy in the criminal courts building and receiving the same encouragement that I had received about my professional life.

Judge Ken Black has recounted similar encouragement by Judge Gadbois. I am sure that there are countless other lawyers and externs who have been helped professionally and personally by Judge Gadbois.

Dick was a man of many facets. Not only was he a fine jurist, but he also spent time in the seminary, which left indelible marks on his character and on his soul. I frequently saw him at Mass on Sunday mornings.

Dick and Vicki and my wife Dinah and I enjoyed each other's company in recent years. My family and so many other acquaintances of Judge Gadbois feel a tremendous sense of loss at his passing, and we will all dearly miss him.

Judge Gadbois was a fine husband, father, colleague, and true friend whom we will not see again on this earth but whom we will see in the next life. I am honored to have known him and to count myself as one of his legions of friends.