

In Re: MEMORIAL SERVICES FOR:

CREGG E. MAYROSH

ROBERT S. TAYLOR, JR.

RENALD S. BARATTA

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Memorial Services held in Courtroom No. 1 in the Northampton County Government Center, Easton, Pennsylvania on October 4, 1994.

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HONORABLE ROBERT A. FREEDBERG, PRESIDENT JUDGE  
HONORABLE JAMES C. HOGAN  
HONORABLE WILLIAM F. MORAN  
HONORABLE F. P. KIMBERLY McFADDEN  
HONORABLE ROBERT E. SIMPSON, JR.  
HONORABLE JACK A. PANELLA

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JUDGE FREEDBERG: Good morning. We are about to convene the Annual Memorial Service of the Court of Common Pleas. And for that purpose I recognize William K. Murphy, President of the Northampton County Bar Association.

MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Your Honor.

May it please the Court, members of the Northampton County Bar Association, family and friends of our deceased members. We convene this morning to remember and eulogize three of our colleagues; Cregg E. Mayrosh, Esquire, who died on September 28, 1993; Renald S. Baratta, Esquire, who died on July 11, 1994; Robert S. Taylor, Jr., Esquire, who died on October 21, 1993.

It may be said that to pursue and succeed in one's chosen profession is a noble deed; but for one to surpass the exacting standards of their professions is to fulfill a greater cause and to raise the level of excellence for those who follow. We honor such persons this morning.

This is a solemn time in the life of our Association, but also one of celebration of the deeds and accomplishments of our colleagues. The storied careers of the members of our Association help form and shape not only our history but also our lives, as well.

Our rich history and heritage are exemplified in the memory of our deceased colleagues. We must never forget the great responsibility which is placed upon us to respect and protect the rights of one another and exhibit compassion, understanding and tolerance.

This commemoration is a tradition which is unique to most professions. It is a time to say, "thank you" and "well done." It is the acknowledgment of a practice of trust, respect and integrity. Our colleagues took an oath of fidelity

and promised to uphold the trust of their clients as that of an unwritten, binding covenant.

This then is the calling as heard by those whom we commemorate today and whose legacy has now passed to their successors.

On behalf of the Northampton County Bar Association, I thank the Judges of our Court for specially designating this morning for the Memorial Service and for the Court's participation.

I thank the eulogists who will participate in this morning's ceremony, Judge Richard D. Grifo, Judge Jack A. Panella and Walter Peters, Esquire.

I respectfully request that the Court recognize the eulogists beginning with Judge Grifo.

Thank you, Your Honor.

JUDGE PANELLA: May it please the Court, Fellow Judges, Members of the Bar, Renald's family and friends, and members of the families and friends of the other deceased members of the Bar:

Renald Baratta passed away only about three months ago, but it seems like an eternity without him. With the brief time we have this morning we can only give you a brief glimpse of the lives which touched and affected our own.

I was fortunate to know Renald both professionally and personally, and although it is easy to state a chronology of his life and accomplishments, it is unfortunate that many of you never knew the man whom I grew close to; an attorney who was wise from years of trial experiences but others only dream of, and a husband, father and grandfather, and for me, a father-figure who never stopped providing for those he loved.

In the last few years it seemed that Renald and his wife, Pat, were inseparable. At special events, in restaurants, behind the counter in that kitchen of theirs they were always together and happy. Renald lived to see his six children complete their educations and establish their own lives. Seeing Renald with his grandchildren would bring a smile to everyone's face.

He was alive with vitality and enthusiasm, a spirit that was always optimistic; a well-educated man with culture, who could comfortably discuss opera and the arts as well as the sports page.

Renald had the type of envious career desired by many practicing attorneys, high profile litigation, public service, politics and community service.

Renald finally got a start in his career when he entered Lafayette College following an enlistment in the United States Marine Corps. Upon graduation from Lafayette, he was accepted at Georgetown University Law School. There were a lot of familiar faces down there at Georgetown at the time, and Renald made some friendships that would remain with him throughout his entire professional life, including Judge James Hogan, whom Renald would strongly support for Judge despite his own aspirations for the Bench, and George Baurkot, a good friend and eventual partner.

While still in law school, Renald clerked with Attorneys Gus Milides and Charles Spaziani. And after graduation he entered into the practice of law with them at Jake Raub and Max Flitter's office on Seventh Street here in Easton. Because he showed a flair for criminal defense work, he quickly joined Gus and Spaz in the then unofficial Northampton County Public Defender's Office, better known at the time as the quote, when asked by a Judge, the Freebee Defender's Office. It was amazing how many cases Spaz, Gus and Renald would handle for nominal compensation paid by the County and oftentimes no fees at all.

In one of these appointment cases Renald was driving to Graterford State Prison to interview a client charged with killing another inmate in prison. The Prison administration charged the defendant because he was the only inmate in the area of the homicide to have blood on his clothes. Renald's good friend, George Baurkot, was along for advice. Renald cautioned George before the interview because his client followed a religion that prohibits smoking, drinking

and swearing and just think for a moment—Renald and George interviewing this type of person. Although the religion prohibits smoking, drinking and swearing, somehow the religion accepted murder. George inquired if Renald was going to plead the defendant but Renald responded, I'm going to walk him, meaning go to trial. Renald's defense was that the defendant was the first to reach the victim after the assault. His clothes were covered with blood because he had caressed and hugged the victim as he lay dying in the prison corridor. Renald was paid a very small amount by the County for the trial but with his own money he purchased the defendant a suit so he would look presentable at the time of trial. The verdict in the murder one trial was not guilty.

More murder trials and felony trials followed. The acquittals piled up. Renald quickly developed an extensive criminal practice and for a time, Renald was the most prominent criminal defense attorney in the County.

However, Renald's reputation grew not solely as a criminal lawyer. He represented plaintiffs and defendants alike in State and Federal Court with equal ease.

Renald opened his own separate office on Lehigh Street in Birdie's office, where the Government Center now stands.

Renald and his friend, George, along with Attorney Elwood Malos, then formed a partnership, and together they practiced for seven years on Washington Street, where the probation office is now located.

When the partnership had run its course, Renald purchased a beautiful building on 14th Street, where he would remain until just recently.

Politics and public office were enchanting to Renald. He earned and relished his reputation as a renegade and rebel Democrat when, in 1963, he ran against the incumbent Register of Wills, who happened at the time to be the chairperson of the Northampton County Democratic Party. Although he had the organized party against him, Renald campaigned hard and vigorously and won with phenomenal grassroots support. He served as Register of Wills from 1964 to 1967.

Renald's return to public service was touching and proud when in 1988 Gene Hartzell, the County Executive, appointed him to the County Solicitor's Office.

At Bar meetings it was a delight to be around Renald. He took great pride in being one of the best orators of legal war stories in the County. Look for a grouping of young attorneys smiling with a respectful laugh now and then and there would be Renald in the center, with a Dewars on the rocks in his hand. His love of the law, his way with words, always present but never more noticeable than when he was holding Court before a crowd of youthful attorneys.

My personal memories of Renald are precious. The first time I met Renald was here in the Courthouse. Renald was standing by the steps near Courtroom Number 5 waiting for a jury deliberating in a homicide case. I was astonished by how cool and calm he was. His speech was paced deliberately. He was every image of the litigator. Then he lit a cigarette and showed his true emotions as he proceeded to take the entire cigarette down in one strong drag.

I knew I wanted to practice with Renald after he handled the criminal trial presided over by Judge Franciosa when I was a judicial law clerk. The charges were assault, and the main prosecution eyewitness was a Vietnamese gentleman who had only recently moved to the country. On direct examination he provided strong prosecution testimony, but he spoke in broken English making communication with the Assistant District Attorney difficult. Renald conducted the entire cross in broken English—the two of them—Renald and the witness, going back and forth in incomplete sentences. I was amazed. The jury was amazed. Judge Franciosa wasn't amazed. He knew the tide was turning in what should have been an open and shut case.

Renald's building on 14th Street was dear to many members of the Bar. Renald was generous to the extreme as he gave many attorneys their first office usually for small or no rent at all. Attorney Harry Blair, Herb Giobbi and myself, among others, we all opened our first office in Renald's building.

I practiced with Renald for five years. When you first open an office fees are hard to come by and cash flow is just about non-existent. I remember the day, a few weeks after my office opened, when Renald's incredibly loyal secretary, Jean Hunt, walked up to my desk and handed me a \$200 check and said, here, Renald said go buy some groceries. My wife and I could never repay that type of generosity.

Whenever we would take Renald and Pat out to dinner to thank them for Renald's graciousness, Renald would insist on paying the bill.

I was there at the time, and I know that not many things in his life gave Renald more happiness than Stephen's graduation from law school and when Stephen joined Renald in his office. When Stephen was by his side, Renald, although not physically commanding, always stood ten feet tall.

He was not an easy man to keep still. You had to be fast to get Renald at the office. Back at the office when asked if Renald were there Stephen would always answer, well, I feel his aura, he was here recently but I'm not sure where he is right now.

Well, I feel Renald's aura this morning, that laugh, that quick Baratta wit, the sly smile. Our lives have been enriched by him, and although it has been just a short time that he's gone, I find that I miss him immensely already.

Thank you.

JUDGE FREEDBERG: Judge McFadden will respond for the Court.

JUDGE McFADDEN: President Judge Freedberg, colleagues on the Bench, members of the Bar Association and friends and family of Robert S. Taylor, Jr., Cregg Mayrosh and Renald Baratta.

It is with deep sadness that this Court convenes today to reflect upon the lives and work of our esteemed members who have passed away within the last year. As a Court we are honored to have the family and friends of our deceased members with us for this memorial service.

I am honored to have been chosen by our President Judge to perform this melancholy task. However, it is with sincere frustration that I must admit to a humble feeling of inadequacy in executing the job at hand. Each of these gentlemen touched the lives and practices of so many in this County and beyond. Mere words will not fully capture the impact they had upon us, nor will those words evoke the panoply of memories of them each of us possesses.

Those we honor today stood in the well of this Courtroom and took the oath of attorney—"to behave himself within this Court, according to the best of his learning and ability" and "not to delay the cause of any person for lucre or malice." Each of them fulfilled that oath with distinction.

We are here today to pay tribute to those brethren whose careers were felled midstream, as well as those who were in the sunset of long and active lives. Today's list includes a former law clerk to this Court, an Assistant District Attorney, Cregg Mayrosh. Renald Baratta was a prominent criminal defense attorney whose frequent trial battles assured him legendary status at our Bar. These gentlemen loved the arena and the excitement of a jury trial and were involved frequently in significant civil and criminal litigation. Robert S. Taylor, Jr. was a true solicitor in the English sense, whose office practice involved business, real estate and estate work. He continued the practice in Bethlehem established by his father. Each was active on the boards of many community agencies, educational institutions and volunteer service groups. While their practices were divergent, their goal was universal—to be a good lawyer.

They each had a special claim to the regard, esteem and affection of the Judges and lawyers of this County.

As a Court, we feel a deep sense of loss and sorrow. We may all be consoled by the knowledge that theirs were useful and active lives dedicated to the law.

The memorial committees have admirably recounted the accomplishments and the record of the public service of these gentlemen. We are indebted to them and concur and join in the sentiments so well expressed.

We express our deep sense of sorrow and loss to the families of our deceased brethren. Their records remain unblemished and will continue to bring honor to them, to their families and to the Courts they served with fidelity and devotion.

In recognition of the distinguished careers of Robert S. Taylor, Jr., Cregg Mayrosh and Renald Baratta, the Resolutions presented are unanimously adopted. The record of this proceeding is ordered spread on the minutes of this Court. Copies thereof shall be sent to the families of our deceased colleagues.

The Court will stand adjourned in honor of and out of deep respect for Robert S. Taylor, Jr., Cregg Mayrosh and Renald Baratta.

The Bar Association invites all in attendance today to a reception in the jury lounge on the first floor of this Courthouse.

Argument Court will convene in Courtroom Number 3 immediately following this service.

Thank you.

JUDGE FREEDBERG: We are in recess.

(CONCLUDED.)