

A. ALBERT GROSS

Remarks by George F. Coffin, Jr.

MAY IT PLEASE THE COURT, members of the family, friends of A. Albert Gross, fellow members of the Bar, guests:

I am pleased to participate in the Memorial Service which we are holding in memory of A. Albert Gross. He served his profession and his community with honor and devotion over a period of time spanning an era of over half a century.

I first became acquainted with Albert in this very courtroom upon my admission to the Bar in 1928. At that time, Albert was associated with Asher Seip, who enjoyed one of the largest and most active practices in Northampton County. Asher Seip's office was on the floor above my office in the Northampton National Bank Building. I saw Albert almost on a daily basis during those early years and all through his active professional career. Unlike most young lawyers, who at that time were dabbling in politics as an avenue to gaining public attention with the hope of acquiring some clients, Albert was busy with the law from the very beginning of his career by reason of the fact that Mr. Seip had become active in the founding of the Lafayette Trust Company. This venture, as the depression deepened and financial panic seized the country, required Mr. Seip, as President of this bank, to devote more and more time to it. The result was to place much of the work which Mr. Seip would have otherwise done upon the shoulders of Albert Gross. Mr. Seip's health began to fail and after a prolonged illness, Mr. Seip succumbed in 1935.

Albert continued the practice of the law as a sole practitioner in the same offices which he and Mr. Seip had occupied, and as time went by he proved to Mr. Seip's many clients that he had the ability to handle their affairs and they stayed with him. His qualities for superb workmanship became widely recognized. Among those clients was the Pennsylvania Manufacturers Association which was writing about 90% of all workmen compensation policies in Northampton County. He continued to represent that Company throughout his career.

He increased his practice and soon found that he needed assistance, eventually forming the firm which existed so long as he continued in the active practice of the law.

We moved in the same social circles, although our friendship could never have been described as a close personal friendship. I never was engaged in work with him or in trying cases with him, but I tried many cases opposing him and was involved in many business matters in which he represented opposite interests. Many times I heard lawyers grumble that Albert took too much time and was too meticulous in the preparation of agreements. I never felt that way about matters in which there was paperwork involved, because when Albert had reviewed the agreement, you could rest assured that all of the loose ends had been pretty well buttoned up, and you were not going to have something else pop up years later to haunt you.

I had ample opportunity to study Albert Gross firsthand. He was deliberate, rather than impetuous. He was not given to off-the-cuff opinions. His word was his bond. He was careful, not slipshod or given to rash statements. He was determined and thorough and as a result highly successful. I never saw him lose his temper no matter how provoked.

He sought his relaxation in affairs which called upon mental activity rather than physical activity and was involved in many community affairs. He carved a niche for himself in the history of our Bar which will long be remembered. His passing has created a void which will be most difficult to fill. We will remember him always as a man devoted to his family, his community and his profession, which he served with honor and distinction.

Remarks by Andrew L. Herster, Jr.

MAY IT PLEASE THE COURT, members of the family of A. Albert Gross, my fellow attorneys, ladies and gentlemen:

On this day, we pause to honor and recall the life of a revered attorney, A. Albert Gross.

Al, as we affectionately called him, practiced his beloved profession for over a half century. Many of the younger attorneys at the bar today probably never came into contact professionally with Al. The lawyers who did practice law with

him profited by his counsel and learned quickly to respect his professional abilities.

Al was born August 28, 1899 in Philadelphia, Pa. He graduated from Harrisburg Technical School, Harrisburg, Pa. in 1918. In 1922, he graduated from Lehigh University with a degree in Chemical Engineering. Indeed he followed a career in chemical engineering for a period of time from 1922 to 1925 working for an engineering firm in York, Pa.

Al always had the urge to be a lawyer and finally he gave up the engineering career he had worked so hard to achieve to apply to Yale Law School and to begin his law studies in 1926. Al graduated in 1928 from Yale Law School, always contending the years spent in his engineering studies and work gave him the added training to be acutely accurate and indeed most meticulous in his law practice.

Many of the lawyers and Judges here assembled, who had the privilege of practicing law with Al, can vividly recall, some with great impatience, just how meticulous and carefully he carried out his profession. You did nothing sloppy or hurriedly when you worked on a case with Al. All doors were closed when the case was completed.

In January, 1928, Al became an Associate in the law office of the legendary Attorney Asher Seip, and continued with him until 1935 when Mr. Seip died. Al then practiced alone until 1948 when he formed a partnership with James B. McGiffert. In 1951, I had the privilege of being added to the law firm of Gross, McGiffert & Herster. Mr. McGiffert departed from the firm in 1956 and the firm continued as Gross and Herster until 1967 when Henry R. Newton was added to the firm which then became Gross, Herster & Newton. Later, in 1977, William K. Murphy was added to the law firm. Al retired from the practice of law in 1976 because of failing health.

Al served in the Army in World War I and was a member of the Civil Defense in World War II.

Al was extremely active in community affairs during his lifetime. He was a long time director of Family Service of Easton; President of the S.P.C.A. of Northampton County; Vice President of the Redevelopment Authority. He was a member of the Temple Covenant of Peace; a member of the Board of Directors of the Community Chest of Easton; an active member of the Northampton County Bar Association and of the various Appellate Courts of Pa. and of the United States.

He was an Executive Vice President of the Delaware Valley Area Council of Boy Scouts of America and received one of the highest honors from the Boy Scouts of America, the Silver Beaver Award in 1947.

Al loved to mix with the younger members of the Bar and he was happiest when they would call him or seek him out for his advice. Al would sit in the lawyers lounge for hours, discussing some legal principle, while his secretary would be frantically trying to console a client sitting in the waiting room.

Al was deemed to be the most knowledgeable expert involving the laws pertaining to Workman's Compensation. He was so well known in this field that attorneys and even Workman's Compensation Referees would call on him for his interpretation of the Workman's Compensation law.

Al was the ideal lawyer, he gave of himself to his fellow attorneys and to the Court the best of his legal abilities. He had the capacity to probe deeply, explain lucidly legal propositions and to make solid realistic decisions.

Al was an avid trial lawyer whose advocacy before the Court and Jury was always outstanding. Any witness examined by Al was both physically and mentally drained when he or she left the witness stand. Al was exhausting in his examinations but was also well prepared with legal briefs on points he anticipated might be brought up by opposing attorneys.

The older lawyers will humorously remember that in settling any case the hardest thing to settle with Al was who was to pay the court costs. We could settle a case for thousands of dollars, but court costs of \$35.00, more or less, became a stumbling block on many an occasion. As the custom over the years became more that a defendant would also pay the court costs, the Judges would say, even before the matter of costs payment came up, "Al, I hope we are not going to quibble about the court costs." Al, representing a defendant, would invariably reply, "No Judge, not if the Plaintiff pays the costs."

It was a great privilege and an honor for me to be able to begin my law career with Al. He was a patient teacher and a task master at being thorough. Time meant nothing when we talked law or discussed some office legal problem or upcoming trial.

Al felt the client was entitled to his best efforts in their

behalf and he truly gave to his clients his best efforts. His advice was only given after exhaustive study and thought.

His greatest complaint came when the Pennsylvania Supreme Court abolished the Clerkship requirement for new lawyers. He felt the clerkship period gave new lawyers a better feeling for the law and a training period concerning how to deal with the everyday problems with which lawyers are confronted. Particularly, he believed younger lawyers should know how to deal with the courtesies which should be extended to their brethren.

I am glad for this opportunity to pause and make a small contribution to the memory of a dedicated lawyer, a community leader, a warm and personal friend, long time associate and to a person to whom I am personally indebted.

I thank the Court.

RESOLVED, that the foregoing remarks and this Resolution be entered on the minutes of this Court, that copies thereof be sent to his wife, Grace E. Gross, and that when Court adjourns this day, it does so out of respect for the memory of A. Albert Gross.

Remarks by The Honorable Richard D. Grifo

President Judge Williams, my Colleagues on the Bench, Members of the Northampton County Bar Association, Grace Gross, and Family of A. Albert Gross, Esq., Ladies and Gentlemen.

The Court joins, accepts, and approves the Eulogies of Mr. George F. Coffin, Jr., and Mr. Andrew L. Herster, Jr., friends and contemporaries of A. Albert Gross.

The Resolution submitted by Mr. Herster on behalf of the Northampton County Bar Association is unanimously approved and adopted. The Court Reporter is directed to transcribe the proceedings, and the Court directs that they be made a part of the permanent records of this Court. The Court further directs that the Resolution of the Bar Association, and the Eulogies delivered by Mr. Coffin and Mr. Herster, be printed in the County Reporter; and that a copy of these proceedings be forwarded to the Family of Mr. Gross.

Those of us who have known A. Albert Gross, Esq., have

enjoyed a great privilege; and in his passing, this Bar and the legal profession suffer a great loss - a lawyer of principle, knowledge, devotion and dedication has left it. Not without, however, leaving a permanent contribution to its integrity and to its continuation.

Mr. Coffin and Mr. Herster have ably recounted his contributions as a lawyer and as a citizen. They need no repetition. I add, only, a personal touch. Mr. Coffin, although younger in years than Al, was already at the Bar when Mr. Gross was admitted. I recall meeting Mr. Gross in 1945 when I started working in Mr. Coffin's office as an Associate.

George was quick to warn me of Al's abilities in the Workmen's Compensation field - and I was quick to learn of his prowess as an advocate in compensation matters. My claimants and I both suffered through many of his grueling cross-examinations.

We assemble today to acknowledge in the Annals of the History of the Judicial System of this county the contributions made by our deceased member.

He was a man of superlative high service, complete integrity and boundless enthusiasm for whatever task he took in hand. No one who was privileged to know him can forget his candor.

He never refused to take on a hard task which needed to be done. What he preached, he practiced. What he believed, he believed with his heart and soul. Nor could anyone have been associated with him without having been impressed with his firmness, steadfastness and stability. He was a person of wisdom, and he was particularly precise in his judgment.

His qualities of mind and character peculiarly fitted Al Gross for pre-eminent service as a member of the Bar, and it was his constant practice to make a studious and conscientious disposition of every problem brought to his attention.

He brought to the performance of his duties an orderly and constructive mind, rare analytical powers, together with deep human sympathies that stamped him as a competent lawyer.

In his death, the Bar, his many friends, and the community at large, have lost a just and wise citizen, a true and devoted friend, and one whose place will be hard to fill.

Lincoln once said: "I have an irrepressible desire to live until I can be assured that the world is a little better for my having lived in it," A. Albert Gross has made the world better for having been a good lawyer.

When this Court adjourns this day, it shall do so in memory and honor of our departed Colleague.

December 23, 1981