

JOHN C. HAMBROOK

By Frank S. Poswistilo

John C. Hambrook was born on May 16, 1921, in Troy, New York; he was a son of the late Dr. Augustus J. Hambrook and Anne O'Brien Hambrook. John attended parochial schools in Troy and was graduated from the Wharton School of Finance and Commerce, University of Pennsylvania, 1942, with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Economics. After being graduated he entered the United States Air Force and served in the European theatre until September, 1945, when he was separated with the rank of Captain.

Indicative of John's devotion to his country, he continued his interest in the Armed Services and at the time of his death on October 16, 1977, he was a Lieutenant Colonel in the Easton Flight of the Air Reserve Squadron, U. S. Air Force. He was a member of the Lt. C. Baker Post, V.F.W., and had been a Vice-Commander of the Brown & Lynch Post, American Legion.

After being separated from the active service, he entered the University of Pennsylvania Law School in the fall of 1945 and received a Bachelor of Law Degree in February, 1948. At the recommendation of the Dean of the law school to the late Edward J. Fox, Esquire, John was invited to become associated with Mr. Fox, which relationship continued as an associate and then as a partner of the firm of Fox, Oldt and Hambrook for 25 years of John's 29 years of practice.

I first met John some five years after he came to Easton. One weekday morning during the Lenten Season of 1953, after attending the 8:00 o'clock Mass at St. Michael's in downtown Easton, John addressed me: "Aren't you a newly admitted lawyer?" to which I replied, "Yes." He then introduced himself as John Hambrook and invited me over to The Patch for a cup of coffee. The Patch was a diner located at the Northwest corner of Third and Spring Garden Streets where the Valley Federal Building is now erected. Thereafter, for many Lenten Seasons over the years, John and I would share coffee in the early morning. I remember on one occasion when, as we were going for coffee, John remembered that he failed to take out the garbage that day. Characteristic of John's devotion to duty, the two of us went up to his home on College Hill, he took out the garbage and we had a cup of coffee with Jane.

John was justifiably proud of his family. On November 12, 1949, he married the attractive Jane Lois McLaughlin, daughter of a renowned Easton Dentist, the late Dr. Robert E. McLaughlin and the charming Mrs. Hazel M. McLaughlin. Two children were born to John and Jane; a son, John E., who is now a dental student at Temple University, and Julie, who is now a teacher and owner of a part-time business in Rye, New Hampshire.

As John was devoted to his church and country, he was devoted to his family, and the pride that he had for his family, he shared with others. I remember in the late '50's, John showing pictures of the infants John and Julie, and throughout the years, he would share with his friends, the events of their lives — John going to Swain Country School; Julie, backpacking through Europe; John's diving for the swim team; Julie, being in Alaska; John, going to Colgate; Julie, going to the University of New Hampshire; Julie, teaching and John, going to Dental School. John would relate these events, not as a boastful parent, but as one who had deep love and concern for his children and who experienced a deep joy from their happiness and accomplishments.

John's love and concern were not limited to the immediate members of his family, but extended to all. John in his quiet, unassuming friendly manner, moved around the community getting things done to make this area a better place. His was an active apostolate. In 1951 he was Chairman of the drive for the Easton United Fund; in 1954, he headed Easton Area's Cancer Crusade; in 1955, he was elected president of the Easton Community Council. For 24 years he was an active member of the Easton Rotary Club and served as its president in 1959. He was Vice President of the Easton Area Chamber of Commerce in 1969. He was a member of the Civil Service Police Board and was made president in 1956. John had an active interest in Democratic politics from the inception of the Young Democrats of Northampton County back in the late 1950's and throughout the years that followed. In 1969 John had the backing of the Northampton County Democratic Committee as candidate for one of the two judgeship openings. John cross-filed as did the Honorable Richard D. Grifo. Although John did not get the Democratic nomination, he did get the Republican nomination; however, he withdrew from the race after the primary.

In 1957, John was selected by the Easton Area Junior Chamber of Commerce as the "Young Man of the Year." In 1971 he

was honored by the Rev. Joseph McShea, Bishop of Allentown, for his efforts on behalf of the Catholic Charities Appeal. John was a Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus.

Professionally, Mr. Hambrook was a member of this Bar for 29 years at the time of his death. He was admitted to practice before the Appellate Courts of this State, the Federal District Courts and the Supreme Court of the United States. As he fulfilled his various civic positions with his quiet but effective manner, so did he practice law. As a defense attorney on the civil side, he was involved in the arena of the court room serving his clients with ability and fidelity. In addition, he served as Solicitor for Northampton County from 1956 to 1968 and in 1974-76 he served as Solicitor for the City of Easton. In his dealings with his fellow attorneys, he was extremely fair and courteous, not only to his contemporaries, but to the younger members of the Bar to whom he always made himself known. His colleagues at the Bar elevated him from Secretary to President of the Northampton County Bar Association in 1964. As an aside, I may add that John, in his inevitable fashion, considered it his good fortune that during his administration, the Bar experienced such good health that no memorial services were necessary while he was President.

Throughout the life of John C. Hambrook, service and devotion were his hallmarks. Service to his God, to his family, to his country, to his profession, and to his fellow man distinguished John C. Hambrook as a gentleman-lawyer of the highest order. With his passing, I lost a dear friend -- John was best man at my wedding some 22 years ago last week; his family lost a devoted husband and loving father; and the Community lost a noble citizen.

On behalf of the Northampton County Bar Association, this Committee, comprised of Louis Minotti, Jr., and myself, respectfully offers the following Resolution in memory of John C. Hambrook and moves its adoption:

RESOLVED, that the foregoing remarks and this Resolution be entered in the minutes of this Court, that copies thereof be sent to Mrs. Jane Hambrook, and that when this Court adjourns this day, it does so out of respect for and in memory of John C. Hambrook.

January 23, 1978