

PETER RYBAK

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Remarks by Lawrence J. Briody

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MAY IT PLEASE THE COURT AND MY BRETHREN IN THE BAR:

And now, this first day of November, 1983, the family and friends of Attorney Peter Rybak and we of the Bar have assembled to pay a few fond farewells to Attorney Peter Rybak and fittingly in the place where he served and worked with dignity for most of his life.

The committee of the Northampton County Bar Association has requested that I assume the task of listing some of the special occasions in the life of our departed friend, Attorney Peter Rybak.

The chronological sequence of events in his life are many. Attorney Peter Rybak was born on March 23, 1923, and deceased on September 10, 1983. The period in between his birth and death contained many memorable accomplishments.

Attorney Peter Rybak was the son of John and Katie Rybak, and his father toiled for many years in the services of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation. He was a product of the Bethlehem public schools, and upon graduating from high school commenced work with the Bethlehem Steel Corporation. Attorney Rybak's career was interrupted by the Second World War. Even though he was an experienced machinist and entitled to a deferment from serving with the Armed Forces of the United States, he enlisted almost immediately, serving his country well in a combat role aboard a destroyer.

Ten days after his honorable discharge from the United States Navy, Attorney Peter Rybak commenced his formal education at Moravian College, graduating therefrom with a B.A. degree. Thereafter, he attended the University of Pennsylvania, Wharton School and graduated from Temple University School of Law with an L.L.B. degree, being admitted to the Bar of this Court and the Courts of Pennsylvania on December 5, 1955.

Attorney Peter Rybak was married to the former Eleanor Beschoner on April 25, 1964, and three children, namely Brian, Craig and Kurt were born of this marriage before the untimely death of his first wife on October 2, 1973. Thereafter, Attorney Peter Rybak married his wife's best friend, Margaret Cygan.

This marriage union brought the children for which Attorney Peter Rybak labored long and hard to raise ten, seven children having been born to his wife, Margaret, at the time of his marriage to her on August 24, 1974. One child, Elissa, was born of the second marriage.

The accomplishments of Attorney Peter Rybak to public service filled a great portion of his time, having been a Deputy Attorney General, representing the Department of Labor and Industry, serving as Administrator to the Mayor of the City of Bethlehem and being elected a Councilman of the City of Bethlehem. During his practicing days he also served as an Assistant District Attorney and Assistant Public Defender. The remaining portion of his time was spent as an active trial lawyer in the Civil and Criminal Courts of the Commonwealth. At the time of his decease, Attorney Peter Rybak was one of the Democratic choices to serve the County of Northampton as a Councilman. However, his untimely death made this victory seem hollow.

Attorney Peter Rybak was a man of many accomplishments as have heretofore been stated. I believe all of his fellow members of the Bar will agree that he served each office and performed each task with grace, dignity and competence.

We and his family certainly will be blessed with the memories and enrichment he has added to the life of his family and the justice system of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. How he acted, stood, walked and talked, how he turned, how he held us in the ambit of his glance will remain in our mind's eye forever.

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Remarks by William C. Rybak

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Honorable Judges, Members of the Northampton County Bar Association, Margaret Rybak and Children, Brothers and Sisters of Peter Rybak, Relatives, Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Peter Rybak passed from this life on September 10, 1983 at or about four-thirty in the afternoon at The University of Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia. When the news of Peter's death became known, Peter's widow and children and my family were deluged with letters and cards of condolences from people from all walks of life. At this time, I would like to read into the record one such expression of sympathy received by Margaret Rybak which reflects the feelings expressed by all who knew him. It reads, "Please accept my condolences on Pete's passing. I knew him both in the Court Room and on the campaign trail. He was always dedicated to his clients and a

true gentleman. We shall miss him. With Sincere condolences. Signed Robert A. Freedberg. In addition, Margaret Rybak, children, brothers and sisters of Peter Rybak and all those who knew Peter, can all attest to the fact that Peter was a beautiful human being."

Although my heart is heavy at the loss of a brother who was truly my closest friend, I am able to be consoled and indeed inspired by his enthusiasm for life and by his dedication to family, friends and clients.

The son of immigrant parents, Pete Rybak was instilled with the work ethic at an early age. As a growing lad, he painted the house, chopped wood, carried the coal and did varied labor work around the house. When he graduated Vo-Tech, he worked in brickcoating and as a machinist in Bethlehem Steel, and while a law student at Temple University he drove a cab on the streets of Philadelphia, worked as a claims adjuster with an insurance company with his friend and colleague, Attorney Lawrence Briody, and he worked in a library and did research for some of his law professors...I can't remember a time when he didn't have a job...I can't remember a time when he wasn't contributing to his family.

When World War Two broke out, Pete joined the United States Navy and served with distinction in the European Theater of War. I recall an incident Peter related to me during the war. He was assigned to serve on a destroyer "The Mayrant." The executive officer of the destroyer was Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr. As the ship approached Palermo, Italy, it was sprayed with bombs by Nazi planes overhead. Bodies were flying all over the deck. Many of Peter's shipmates were killed and many more sustained injuries.

Peter, being a machinist, was ordered below deck to pump the water away from the ship's machinery in order to save the ship. In carrying out his orders, Peter was in water up to his hips for 48 hours. The destroyer was saved, but Peter sustained a permanent crippling condition of progressive arthritis. Peter was proud to serve his country. He never sought Veteran's Disability Benefits for his arthritic condition. He accepted and lived with his constant pain from that day until his recent passing from this life. Pete stated many times "My country under the GI Bill of Rights was good to me. It provided me with the funds necessary to realize my dream of becoming a lawyer by attending and graduating from Moravian College and Temple University School of Law.

Peter was a good lawyer...a compassionate attorney whose wealth consisted of his knowledge that he never applied less than his fullest resources in behalf of every client, regardless of their social or financial standing.

His legion of friends long ago became aware that material acquisitions and monetary wealth were less important to Pete Rybak than that of acquiring lasting relationships with the people whose lives he touched.

Husband...father...companion...he was all of those to his devoted wife and the 11 children who were honored to call him "Dad." In spite of his busy civic and business life, he always found time to share his advice and impart his love to those who were so close to him.

Tragedy was no stranger to Pete Rybak, but it did not dampen his spirit nor deter him from the pursuit of his goals. His beloved first wife died in childbirth and an eleven year old son was struck down and killed by a drunken driver.

His ability to spring back from misfortunes such as these is eloquent testimony to his sterling character and unshakable spirit, rather than dwell on the tragedies that would have shattered lesser men, Pete Rybak plunged even deeper into the civic and community projects in which he had been involved through all of his adult life.

Pete Rybak was truly a man among men..he lived his life with a dignity, humility and tenderness that stands as a shining example to those of us who remain to help carry out those few things that he has left undone.

His untimely death, coming at the young age of 60, has taken Pete Rybak from our bosoms with a suddenness that is difficult to accept, let alone describe.

Let us today, as we eulogize Pete Rybak, pause to reflect on the principles that were so much a part of his life and rededicate ourselves to the causes which he so earnestly embraced.

We miss him, oh, how we miss him, to be sure, but the hurt is lessened considerably by the fact that Pete Rybak would not want us to tarry here eulogizing him, rather, he would want us to proceed with our own endeavors, sharing our knowledge and talents with those who need us.

Thank You.

Remarks By The Honorable Alfred T. Williams, Jr., P.J.

The untimely death of Peter Rybak will never blot from memory his outstanding record as a man and as a lawyer. That record will forever bring honor to him, to his family and to the courts of the Commonwealth he served with such unfailing devotion and distinction.

The judges of this Court feel a deep sense of sorrow and loss, but there is a measure of consolation in the knowledge that his was a useful life.

Upon Motion of Lawrence J. Briody, Esquire, Chairman of the Committee of the Northampton County Bar Association appointed to memorialize Attorney Peter Rybak, the prayer of the Motion is granted and the within proceedings are directed to become a part of the official minutes of the Court, and a copy thereof shall be sent to the family of the late Attorney Peter Rybak, and when this Court adjourns this day, it will do so out of respect for and in honor of Attorney Peter Rybak.

November 1, 1983