

EDMUND P. TURTZO

By Donald F. Spry, II

May it please the Court.

I have been called upon to perform a most difficult task — to report the untimely death of Edmund Pasquale Turtzo on September 9, 1976. Perhaps the difficulty with this duty is heightened by my own deep feeling of regret and sense of personal loss, and I feel it is entirely fitting that this Bench and Bar suspend for a moment its activities to honor the memory of a man who successfully, actively and continuously practiced law in Northampton County for approximately 35 years.

He was born in Bangor on October 18, 1916, the son of John Turtzo and Mary Ronca Turtzo, the fourth son in a family of eight, which produced two medical doctors and a successful businessman in addition to Edmund, all of whom served their Slate Belt Community.

The age difference between he and I preclude a recounting of his early life by personal recollection, however, numerous conversations with him disclosed that he attended the Bangor public schools, graduated from Penn State University in 1938, the University of Pennsylvania Law School in 1941 and was admitted to the Bar of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania and of several Courts of Northampton County in 1942, returning to Bangor, where he began the practice of law in the Slate Belt. He was a member of the Supreme and Superior Courts of Pennsylvania, the A.B.A., P.B.A. and A.T.L.A., as well as the Northampton County Bar Association, of which he served as president in 1959. In addition, he was a member of the Federal Bar Association.

My personal recollection of Edmund, commences with my request and his acceptance to act as my preceptor prior to my entry to law school. I subsequently clerked for him, associated with him, and eventually became his partner. I learned to respect him for his abilities, ideals and ethical approach to the practice of law, as well as the service he rendered on behalf of his clients. Some of my fondest recollections of the man, involved discussions of cases, files and clients—I was trying to learn to practice the law and in efforts to do so, I talked to him, observed him, and learned from him. I quickly learned, upon my graduation from law school, that my legal education in many respects was just beginning, in-

stead of being completed — three years in a law school does not suffice to master either the technique or theory of the law.

I feel that a man's teachings reveal his character, for one cannot but help to pass on to others his feelings, beliefs and ideals. He had a heartfelt commitment to the law and prepared his cases well, for he felt he owed his client and the Court respect because he owed himself these things. He often told me that the courtroom is where you can do your laboratory work, where you can see the practical application of the principles gleaned from books. He was annoyed to see careless and disrespectful manners in the courtroom, for to him the administration of justice seemed more sacred than profane. He respected both his profession and the Court and because of this I respected him. He felt an attorney should be decent, studious, and prepared for any legal emergency, as well as honest in his advice and dealings. That was his creed and he aspired successfully to that ideal throughout his legal career.

In many ways, he was more like a father to me, and his absence has created a void that cannot be filled.

In addition to his successful law practice, he was deeply involved in community affairs. He administered the monies of the William Scott Foundation, which donates to worthwhile charitable purposes in the Slate Belt Community; spearheaded the Moravian College Fund Drives in the northern tier of Northampton County; was a member and past governor of the Bangor Moose Lodge; a member of Bangor Elks Lodge No. 1106, the Pomfret Club and many other organizations. He enjoyed all aspects of life and had multi-faceted outlooks and opinions of a variety of subjects. He expended a great deal of effort in his profession and when free to do so, he lived his life to the fullest, and that was as it should have been.

I feel that his special genius was a particularly human quality he possessed to work with the affluent and the destitute without having his ideals compromised by either. It is, of course, impossible to determine the source of this quality, but I suspect that it stems from the fact that he did not forget from whence he came. He was the son of Italian immigrant parents who initially opened a law practice requiring a monthly rental of \$11.00 and was terribly concerned lest he default on this rental obligation. From such humble beginnings he became a highly successful practitioner whose practice was composed of a broad spectrum of clients ranging from financial institutions, public bodies and businesses to individual clients who desired to have a will drawn or a home purchased, many of whom spoke only Italian. During the course of his practice, he represented a defendant in a murder case, which received national recognition through the media of the day and yet, I am told, it was not uncommon to come into his office and overhear conversations in Italian with individual clients.

Edmund is survived by his wife Mildred, a son Edmund, Jr., and a daughter Marsha. He was a devoted husband and father, and his family was truly the focal point of his life. Their sense of loss is shared by clients, associates, neighbors, friends and, indeed, the entire community. I have lost a good friend, the Bar has lost an able practitioner, and the community has lost a valuable citizen.

January 10, 1977

EDMUND P. TURTZO

By Renald S. Baratta

MAY IT PLEASE THE COURT:

From his admission to the Bar on January 5, 1942, until his untimely death on September 9, 1976, Edmund P. Turtzo, Esq., practiced law in Bangor where he lived his entire life.

The term "country lawyer" has been used to describe several of his colleagues who preceded him, both at the Bar and in death, as one who performs every sort of legal service for every sort of client. Ed fulfilled that role easily as well as dealing with clients' problems which carried him far beyond the confines of the Slate Belt and our own Northampton County. As solicitor for the Slate Belt Apparel Contractors Association and its membership, which grew to be known as the Atlantic Apparel Contractors Association, it put him in almost constant contact with the many phases of the needle trade and in contact with many lawyers from the large metropolitan areas along the entire length of the eastern seaboard. The many phases of the needle trade would indicate the many demands that would be made on Ed for his services to the membership, which demand was constant. I can recall stopping in Ed's office at 7:30 in the morning to discuss matters with him when his telephone would be constantly ringing, demanding from him immediate action in behalf of his clients.

That phase of his practice would normally be sufficient to keep any one lawyer fully occupied but when you consider that Ed served as the solicitor to the Bangor Area School system for approximately thirty years prior to his death (perhaps the longest continuous service as solicitor to a school board) having been recognized as one of the most knowledgeable lawyers in school law. He was referred to by some of his colleagues, who are also school board solicitors, as the "dean" of school board solicitors in our county.

The slate industry, being indigenous to the Slate Belt area, gave rise to a very large demand on Slate Belt lawyers for Workmen's Compensation work. Ed maintained a very active practice in Workmen's Compensation law in behalf of clients as one of the first lawyers to establish silicosis as a work related condition for which Workmen's Compensation came to be awarded.

We all know that Ed maintained a very active general

practice in addition to the several areas to which I have made reference. These highlights of Ed's life as a lawyer may not be unusual to his colleagues, knowing the many demands made on us, first by our clients and then by the community at large; but when we consider that Ed suffered from the crippling effects of arthritis at nine years of age and that he carried that painful affliction with him to his death, we can appreciate more deeply the kind of man Ed was. When he was first afflicted with arthritis, both his legs were in a cast and Dan Joella, Esq., a friend of Ed's, took Ed to school in a wheel barrell. Ed never forgot Dan's loyalty and attention to him for as we know Dan Joella read law in Ed's office and eventually took the bar exam and passed it under Ed's tutorship. Ed was no stranger to pain because of his arthritic condition and a man with lesser courage and determination may have avoided the constant, daily demands on him. Yet Ed carried that burden quietly and gracefully displaying a keen sense of humor and the kindness that can be attested to by our children who Ed would engage in conversation whenever he saw them.

One of the best compliments I can pay Ed is that he never treated a new lawyer or a young lawyer with condescension. He had a deep and abiding respect for the profession and for his colleagues. Ed was an accomplished musician having played the saxophone with skill and talent belying his arthritic condition. He was an avid golfer and a consummate bridge player.

He was a gracious man and a skilled advocate brimming with courage and determination to contribute to people's well-being. Our Bar Association and this court have lost a worthy member who enriched us with his presence and whose spirit will remind us that the calling to practice law demands of us courage, skill, determination and integrity.

The committee moves your Honorable Court that the foregoing remarks and these resolutions be entered in the minutes of the court and that a copy thereof be sent to Mildred Turtzo and when the court adjourns this day, it does so out of deep respect for and in memory of Edmund P. Turtzo.

January 10, 1977