



## Judicial Profile-Roger B. Colton

By: Thomas Hoadley

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Bloomington, "Heart of the Corn Belt," Illinois is two hours south of Chicago. The land is flat and black. Illinois State is at one end of Franklin Street. Illinois Wesleyan is at the other. This is the home of State Farm Insurance. In 1929, Roger Colton's mother was their 39<sup>th</sup> employee.

The local newspaper is Adlai Stevenson's *Pantagraph*. For 60 years, Roger's father was in charge of the School Board. When Roger was in the fourth grade, he listened to the radio a lot. His favorite program was "The FBI in War and Peace." He wanted to be an FBI agent from that time forward. He excelled in high school. Upper 5% in grades, football, basketball and president of the student body. He excelled in his hometown college, Illinois Wesleyan. Upper 5% in grades, Blue Key, president of the student body and his fraternity. He did not play college football, but went to the games to watch a cheerleader, Delores. She was from Chicago, and had been a cheerleader in high school. They started dating as sophomores. After graduation, Delores went back to Chicago to teach school. Roger followed her to Northwestern Law School. He had received a full scholarship. They got married before law school graduation, five years after they met.

One week after graduation from law school, his dream came true. He was in the mud at the FBI boot camp at Quantico. Roger was a special agent in the FBI for nine years, from, 1962 to 1971. He was assigned many different places. Washington, D.C., Denver Monterey Language School (to learn Spanish), New York and San Juan, Puerto Rico. He worked mostly on FBI criminal investigation. But he also did surveillance of organized crime, and violence-prone groups. His goal had always been to replace Mr. Hoover as head of the FBI. But to do this, he would need to make lateral transfers into headquarters in Washington for a year or two. Then out in the field for a year or two. Then back to Washington, advancing up the ladder. His last assignment was in Fort Lauderdale.

He and Delores had a long discussion about this. They liked the weather here. Since their two sons were in school, it was not a good thing to move them to different towns every two years. Roger had a law degree, he could take the Bar in Florida and they could remain here. He passed the Bar in 1970, even though he had been out of school for nine years.

He resigned from the FBI and some agent friends of his told him about a job offer at Foley & Brennan. He came to West Palm Beach and remained with that firm for twenty-three years. The members of the firm changed from time to time. He practiced criminal law, and was active in our Bar Association.

Delores in turn became involved with the Benjamin School. She was hired as a PE instructor and coach for the girls in junior high school. She loves her job and gets to play tennis every day.

I asked him why he wanted to become a judge. He said that Palm Beach County had been good to them. It would be a repayment to end up his legal career as judge. He filed an application for a Circuit Judge position in November 1993. He was a natural to be selected. After all, who knew more about criminal law than Roger Colton? A funny thing happened on the way to the courthouse. He was appointed to the civil division. He had little experience doing that kind of litigation. This was a new challenge and he has worked very hard in learning civil procedure. Some time in the future, he would love to be a juvenile court judge, and certainly his friends know he would be well suited for that.

Bloomington, Illinois, home of State Farm and Adlai Stevenson (and cousin McLean Stevenson) is pure Midwest, and Midwest values. Roger epitomizes its finest values. Patriotism, home, family, scholarship, athletics, friendliness, compassion and finally, trust. Who could come in to judge us better than a person like Roger Colton with these hometown leadership values?