



Judicial Profile- Daniel T.K. Hurley

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June 1994

Why would a son of Ireland have reddish hair? Not from the Celts and druids. Perhaps from Eighth Century red-haired Danish Vikings who established a Norse Kingdom near Dublin. Later, Catholicism came to Ireland with the Normans. Even through the savagery of Cromwell, when priests were hidden in caves, Ireland remained ninety five percent Catholic.

In 1846, two million Irish acres were planted in potatoes. By July, a deadly fungus from America rotted the potatoes in the ground. This was the start of a famine unprecedented in the Western World. This started the Irish Exodus to America. Judge Hurley's family on both sides settled in Fitchburg, forty miles west of Boston.

An Irish priest in his parish was often held to be infallible, and their own families held them in awe. It had been a general custom of the Irish family to give a son to the church. Irish mothers could find no greater honor then to have their son become a priest. The Judge decided to become a Catholic Priest in the eighth grade. He went to a Catholic high school, and was Senior Class President. He went to a Catholic college in New Hampshire, and was Student Government President.

After graduation from college, he applied for and was accepted at the Miami Diocese Seminary in Boynton Beach. He had been there one year when he was sent to Washington to get a master's degree in marriage counseling. Arriving in the Nation's Capitol changed his life. He decided not to become a Priest. He applied for George Washington Law School three blocks from the White House, and was accepted. While in law school, he worked as a legislative aide, in the House Post Office, and listened to debates in Congress and the Supreme Court. This was a very exciting time. After graduation, he clerked for judges in the U.S. District Court, and the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals.

He had taken the Florida Bar, met Marvin Mounts, and decided he wanted to practice criminal law. He started to work for Solicitor Mounts in 1970. He was one of twelve prosecutors and became the Executive Assistant in the office in charge of office training, hiring, office policies, and also tried cases.

In December 1975, when Judge Bill Williams moved to Circuit Court, Judge Hurley was appointed to the County Court bench. Then in 1977 when Judge Knott retired, he was appointed Circuit Court Judge. In 1979, Judges Letts and Downey talked him into coming on the Fourth District Court of Appeals. He remained six years. He describes this period as a growing and learning experience. But this was lonely job and he wanted to see people, and he missed human contact.

In 1985, he took the unusual step of applying back to the Circuit court. When Justice Barkett left for the Supreme Court, he went back on the Circuit bench. Then when Judge Rutter resigned, he became Chief Judge for the next five years. One of his major projects was, of course, to chair a committee to make decisions on our new courthouse. To do this, he had to travel around the country to various new courthouses and talk to judges and architects.

As for his spare time, our newest Federal Judge lives on the beach. He loves to read. This started at the Fitchburg Children's Library. Reading, traveling, fine arts appreciation, museums, judicial biographies, travel to Europe, historical documents, New York trips, discussions with other Judges at seminars are part of his continual learning process.

He admits that he gets much of his strength from his mother. She has a masters in social work, and has spent all of her life helping disadvantaged children. With this caring philosophy coupled with Christian strengths of justice, he believes a Judge can achieve good things when people are hurting.

The last thing that should be mentioned is the high moral code that he lives by. There are no doubt many reasons for this. One argument could be that the Irish are dedicated to their faith, woven into the very fabric of their lives, their staunch respect for parental authority, and their acceptance of the moral doctrines of the Catholic Church. It has been philosophically argued that this gives them an inborn esteem for moral law and authority.

When asked for a parting comment, Judge Hurley wanted it known to the members of the local Bar that Judge Paine, followed by Judge Ryskamp, deserve much credit for turning the local Federal building into a true Federal Courthouse. We will follow up on that later.