

## **JUDGE EDWARD J. COSTELLO**

**The Honorable Frederic W. Allen\***

Shortly after his graduation from Boston University School of Law, Ed Costello, better known as E.J. by his contemporaries, directed Joseph Johnson's successful bid for Governor. In 1955, as a reward, or perhaps as a punishment, he was appointed judge of the Chittenden Municipal Court, then physically located in cramped, dark, and dingy quarters wholly unsuited for their intended purpose. The beginning annual salary was \$2450. He was to remain as a judge of that court and its successor district court until his retirement in 1984. It is a tribute to his dedication and perseverance that he chose to remain a judge under such conditions. His tireless efforts become even more remarkable when one considers the kinds of cases he was faced with each day of his career—juveniles in difficult or impossible family situations, repeat offenders for whom the threat of incarceration was meaningless, and persons facing their first encounter with the law who were in dire need of the correct disposition by the court. Judge Costello did not succumb to the obvious frustrations that he was forced to deal with on a daily basis.

He was compassionate and humane with first time offenders, and stern and firm with repeat offenders. He had a remarkable memory for faces and names which assisted in fashioning appropriate dispositions in his court. A trip to his chambers was usually a most enjoyable experience. Even with his heavy caseload, he would take the time to share a story, hear a plea, and assist wherever possible in the resolution of a problem. I know of no other judge's chambers where a putting green served to relieve tensions. E.J. enjoyed people and treated all with courtesy and dignity. He had the ability to make litigants and lawyers feel that they had been dealt with fairly, no matter what the outcome.

Judge Costello's smile and the ever present twinkle in his eyes will be long remembered. It is most appropriate that the courthouse complex in Burlington bears his name. We have lost a good friend and an excellent judge.

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\* Chief Justice, Vermont Supreme Court.

