IN HONOR OF ALBERT W. BARNEY

By John J. Easton, Jr.*

According to a Persian proverb: "Thinking well is wise; planning well, wiser; doing well wisest and best of all." In Albert W. Barney, Vermont has a man who is wise, wiser, and wisest.

All citizens of the state have benefited from the thoughts of our former Chief Justice. Thinking is hard work. It is harder yet to communicate those thoughts with others. Fortunately for us, Chief Justice Barney's thought process manifests itself in a public record—the Vermont Reports. Since 1959 or Volume 121 of the Vermont Reports, Vermonters have been able to read, understand and appreciate the judicial expertise of Chief Justice Barney. We can all value his legal mind and his judicial ability.

This ability was recognized and proclaimed by his colleagues around the country. The National Conference of Chief Justices selected him to be the Chairman during 1981-1982. That was an honor not only for himself but for our state as well.

We lawyers can appreciate Chief Justice Barney's contribution as a planner by looking at the progress of the judiciary during the nine years he led that branch of government. We have a modernized and well managed court system as a result of his wise planning and inspired leadership. He had the vision and the courage to improve the judicial administration so that the judicial branch of government could fulfill its obligation to the citizens.

Chief Justice Barney has been doing well most of his life. According to the Persian proverb, that makes him wisest and best of all. One way to measure doing well is to look at Chief Justice Barney's achievements and the pace at which he accomplished them.

After receiving his Bachelor of Arts Degree from Yale University in 1942 he served in the United States Navy during World War II. He received his law degree from Harvard two years after he left the Navy. Within two years of being admitted to practice law in Vermont, he became a Representative in the Vermont General Assembly as well as a judge of the Caledonia Municipal Court. A year after that, at the age of 31, he was appointed to the Superior Bench. He served there for seven years until he was elected

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Associate Justice of the Supreme Court at the age of 38. In 1974 he became Chief Justice, serving until his retirement on January 1, 1983. It was during this time that he chaired the National Conference of Chief Justices, served as a member of the Board of Directors on the National Center for State Courts, and was both a faculty and board member of the American Academy of Judicial Education.

Socrates said: "Four things belong to a judge: to hear courteously, to answer wisely, to consider soberly, and to decide impartially." As a lawyer who appeared in his court and as a public official who sought his advice, I can attest that Chief Justice Barney devoted himself to hearing courteously, answering wisely, considering soberly, and deciding impartially. Vermonters are the beneficiaries of those attributes.