

IN MEMORIAM

JOHN F. SULLIVAN

RESOLUTIONS OF THE BLAIR COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

The undersigned Resolutions Committee, appointed by Hays W. Culp, President of the Blair County Bar Association, to prepare and present resolutions ^{on the death} of our deceased brother, John F. Sullivan, presents the following:

John Francis Sullivan was born at 1114 Twelfth Avenue, Altoona, Pennsylvania, a son of Dennis D. and Annie B. Doyle Sullivan, on December 12, 1874, and died October 13, 1937. He attended St. John's Parochial School and was a graduate of St. Francis College, Loretto, Pennsylvania, at the age of fifteen years. He was an accomplished violinist, and the leader of the college orchestra.

During vacation periods, while attending school and college, Mr. Sullivan found employment with the Pennsylvania Railroad Company as a clerk in the office of H. B. Kendig, Shop Clerk for the Altoona Machine Shops. The experience thus gained in accounting, and in association with men, was always highly regarded by the late barrister, and friendships begun there lasted until death.

After graduation from St. Francis College, Mr. Sullivan decided to pursue a legal career and registered as a student of law in the office of his uncle, John A. Doyle, Esq. He later transferred to the office of Thomas H. Greevy, Esq., following the retirement of his uncle from active practice. After having completed the prescribed time and study, Mr. Sullivan took the

final examination before the Blair County Board of Law Examiners, passed with a high rating, and on February 16, 1898, on motion of Mr. Greevy, he was admitted to the Bar. Following his admission, Mr. Sullivan immediately opened his offices in the Schenk Block, later known as the Second National Bank Building of Altoona, and subsequently moved to the Mountain City Trust Building, where his offices were located at the time of his death.

His success as a lawyer was phenomenal. His earliest cases brought him to the forefront as a criminal lawyer and within a few years he established an enviable reputation as an outstanding trial lawyer in the several courts of Blair and adjoining counties. For a generation he was counsel in practically every important homicide case in Blair County, and on many occasions participated in homicide trials in the courts of Dover and Terminer throughout Central Pennsylvania.

Mr. Sullivan's legal activities were not confined to the criminal courts. He was retained in the trial of many important civil causes of action throughout his legal career and on one particular instance was trial counsel for either defendant or plaintiff in every case on the trial list at that term.

Mr. Sullivan was without question the busiest lawyer in the Blair County Bar and enjoyed the largest clientele of any lawyer during the many years of his active practice. He was indefatigable in attentiveness to his legal duties and prepared and presented his cases in court with infinite care for all details. He was truly a successor to the outstanding lawyers who preceded

him in active practice. He demanded preciseness and exactness in the preparation of all legal papers presented to the Court, and his brief was a treatise upon the subject involved. He was at all times an aid to the Court in the disposition of causes of action in which he participated. On many occasions during the argument he would frankly state and admit legal principles which were contrary to the contention of his own client, because, sincere and honest, he at all times presented what he believed to be the true legal principle.

In a remarkable degree he was quick to sense the moral atmosphere of the court room. No one was more alert than he in grasping the attitude of the Judge, the jury, the witnesses, and opposing counsel, nor could anyone more quickly conform to any change. He seldom had occasion for vain regrets over a failure to say at the proper moment the proper thing. His intended speech was completed in the court room and was not a subject for a post-mortem ~~rehash~~ following the trial of the cause. He was swift and sure in perception, and his vivid and sensitive imagination was supported and directed by a prompt and sound judgment. His mental endowments were of a superior and splendid quality. He had a fascinating and impressive personality, a winning address, a strong voice, and brilliant fluency of speech. As occasion seemed to require, but without loss of dignity or of legal refinement, he could be caustic and severely scathing, especially toward an evading witness or in reply to unwarranted remarks by opposing counsel.

In social conversation he was most entertaining and convincing. Indeed his contagious humor might be taken as one of his outstanding characteristics. Often during the recess of the Court, the lawyers would congregate in the Law Library where Mr. Sullivan would engage in witticisms, repartee, and discussions of legal and current events in such a manner as to be the source of admiration, respect, and pleasure of all present. He delighted in narrating his many reminiscences, with particular references to the activities of former members of the Bar.

With all loyalty to truth and honor, he devoted his best talents and attainments to his chosen profession. He recognized that it was the duty of the advocate to maintain the dignity and honor of the courts of which he was an officer, and he fulfilled the same in the highest degree. The very atmosphere of the court room was clarified by his presence, and its conflicts enobled by his presence. The court room, especially the trial court, was the arena in which he found delight, and he enjoyed to the fullest the joy of a legal contest. His appearances there were almost continuous from October to June. It is doubtful if any other member of the Blair County Bar, in the same space of time, appeared in so many and so varied cases as did Mr. Sullivan.

Mr. Sullivan had a very sound mind. Absolute independence was one of the controlling features of his life. He was not without a large share of self-assertion, yet he was one of the most kindly and unselfish of men.

During his long and active practice, Mr. Sullivan kept faith with every fellow member of the Bar. It was not necessary

to have his agreements in writing; his word was as lasting as any written stipulation, and was a positive guarantee of performance in the exact manner as given.

His qualities were so manifold that to speak of him as a lawyer only seems to lose sight of the most human characteristics of our departed brother. He was distinctly friendly in all of his human contacts. The influence of his life will live many times longer than the age of a normal man. The memory of John F. Sullivan will be revered, not only by the present generation of lawyers of Blair County, but through fact and tradition by the generations to come. He was truly a leader; an outstanding individual; a lawyer with unusual intellectual attainments, and an advocate of superlative qualifications.

During his career he was president of the Blair County Bar Association. He was a member of the Blair County Board of Law Examiners and served as its secretary for many years. In this capacity he was of direct assistance in aiding and encouraging newly admitted members to the Bar of the courts of Blair County. He was a member of the Pennsylvania and of the American Bar Associations, and attended many of their annual meetings.

Mr. Sullivan was also a member of the Bars of the Superior and Supreme Courts of Pennsylvania, the United States District Court, the Circuit Court of Appeals, and the Supreme Court of the United States. In addition to his practice in the various courts in Central Pennsylvania, Mr. Sullivan for many years was retained in the preparation and prosecution of appeals to the Appellate Courts of Pennsylvania and the United States.

Mr. Sullivan was always interested in public matters, but never sought preferment as a candidate for any public office.

Mr. Sullivan was a member of the Catholic Faith and for many years attended St. John's Parish, now known as the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament. Since his residence at Sylvan Hills he has been a member of St. Mary's Catholic Church at Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania.

Mr. Sullivan is survived by his wife, Mrs. Dorothy Pennington Sullivan; a son, John Francis, Jr., at home, and a stepson, Howard, a student in Holy Cross College, Worcester, Massachusetts. He is also survived by one brother, J. Austin Sullivan, Esq., a member of the Blair County Bar, of Sylvan Hills, Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania.

The undersigned Resolutions Committee, therefore, unanimously moves that the above resolutions be adopted as the resolutions of the Blair County Bar Association upon the death of our departed brother, John F. Sullivan, and that the same be made a permanent part of the records of the Court of Common Pleas and a copy forwarded to Dorothy Pennington Sullivan, his widow, and to J. Austin Sullivan, his brother.

Robert F. Calkins
Chairman
John F. Sullivan
Robert F. Calkins
J. Frank Sample

COMMITTEE.

Dated: October 17, 1937.

Resolutions of the Blaine County
Bar Association on the death of
JOHN F. SULLIVAN.