

A TRIBUTE TO STANLEY G. FELDMAN

William R. Jones, Jr., Esq.

Anyone who is truly acquainted with Justice Stanley Feldman knows that when his term as Chief Justice of the Arizona Supreme Court ended, it signaled not an ending to a long career of public service, but rather a new chapter in the book that will someday be written extolling the accomplishments of this remarkable man. While his service to the Bar and citizens of the State of Arizona as Chief Justice has certainly represented the most highly publicized and perhaps, to some, controversial part of his career, it is simply a reflection of the virtues which brought him to that position.

Justice Feldman had his initial roots in New York, but grew up as part of a hard-working family in Tucson. He strayed to UCLA for his undergraduate education, but returned to his childhood home where he distinguished himself at the University of Arizona College of Law. During those years he had a love affair with Tucson and the University of Arizona which remains to this day.¹

In his early years he developed the determination and drive which, together with his dedication to public service, have allowed him to distinguish himself as a family man, a citizen, a lawyer, a jurist, and a person dedicated to the well-being of those he served, particularly the most needy among us. As a practicing lawyer, Justice Feldman was willing to take up the cause of those in need whether popular or not. He met the intellectual challenges presented by the problems of his clients and never shied away from plowing new ground in the fertile fields of the common law. No client could ever be concerned that Stanley Feldman would give less than his very best on their behalf.

From the early days, Justice Feldman has loved his profession. During his legal career he was a primary player in endeavoring to improve the profession and the judiciary for all of the people of Arizona. His Presidency of the State Bar of Arizona exemplified his belief that the public grants lawyers a franchise to practice as long as we serve the public's interest. He played a primary role in persuading the State Bar of Arizona to actively participate, financially and otherwise, in ridding Maricopa and Pima Counties of the degrading system of electing judges and substituting the enlightened process of selecting independent judges who would

1. If he must choose between being Chief Justice, playing for the Phoenix Suns or coaching the University of Arizona basketball team, I suspect Lute Olson would be looking for a job.

administer justice equally and evenly among all of our people.

During his distinguished career as a Justice of the Court and ultimately as Chief Justice, Stanley Feldman has fought long and hard, often with substantial personal sacrifice, not only to protect the selection process from political attacks, but also to maintain the judiciary as an independent and equal branch of our democratic system of government. In doing this, he has been subject to attacks by those who would use the judiciary to serve their own political ends. Often these attacks have been vicious and personal. He has withstood them with dignity, courage, and perhaps surprisingly in most instances, with a good sense of humor. To him, the independence of our judicial system is one of the most important standards to be protected.

Justice Feldman has contributed a great deal to the development of the law in Arizona. At times his decisions have been controversial and the subject of substantial disagreement. Even personal friends have criticized the direction in which he took law. Despite the criticism, however, he commands respect as a man of enormous ability and unusual intellectual honesty.

Recently the former Chief Justice broke with tradition and allowed television cameras into jury rooms.² While he risked substantial criticism from the members of the trial bar and judiciary, his motivation—a reflection of his character—was to bolster what he knew to be true: the jury system in America is under serious attack. The citizens of this country needed to know that this remains the greatest dispute resolution system in the world.

Justice Feldman joins other distinguished Arizona lawyers who have been recognized as outstanding leaders of the bench and bar. He will continue in his tireless support of our process and all it should represent. He has accomplished this with the support of his friends and family, particularly his wonderful wife, Norma. For those of us who have had the opportunity to practice with him and before him, we can only hope that he continues his quest for the betterment of our profession and our society.

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2. This is neither the time nor the place to comment on the propriety of the invasion of the sanctity of the jury room by the media. No writing bearing the name of Stanley G. Feldman, however, would be complete without a footnote or two.