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Foreword from the Court

California Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District

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Foreword from the Court

California Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District

It is axiomatic that the practice of law is a thinking person's profession, and one that demands candor, civility, and collegiality. As lawyers, we are fortunate if we are privileged to work in close proximity with a person who exemplifies all these traits in their most refined manifestations. The late Presiding Justice Robert K. Puglia was one of these rare exemplars. The words that follow in the tributes included in this volume come from just a few of the judges, practitioners, and students lucky enough to work with and learn from this great jurist. Law review articles are crafted, and rightly so, toward scholarly purposes, analyzing and critiquing all aspects of our profession. However, on rare occasion, it is appropriate to depart from the usual detached forms of legal academic exposition. Every now and then, we should take the time to pen, and read, something about our work imbued with more warmth and humanity. Ours is a human profession, after all; something Justice Puglia instinctively recognized.

Sacramento's bench and bar is very close knit. Justice Puglia's kindness and loyalty were instrumental in helping to foster that kinship. He was very quiet about it, but he was part of the critical mass that has made Sacramento's legal community unique. He was generous with his time, energy, and insight, to thousands of lawyers and law students throughout his career.

One of Justice Puglia's personal passions was Big Band music. He was a world class expert and collector of this important, thoroughly American music. When word spread of his illness and his difficulty in seeing visitors, several of his friends, including Justice Anthony M. Kennedy and Presiding Justice Arthur G. Scotland, worked together, and with KCTC-AM, to create a means to "visit" Justice Puglia without tiring him. They wrote and broadcast a "Big Band Tribute to Presiding Justice Robert K. Puglia." Justice Puglia was an Ohio State University alumnus. So, Jerry Healey, formerly the voice of Buckeye football, hosted the program, while Justices Kennedy and Scotland, and eleven other friends and colleagues, "spoke" to Justice Puglia and each introduced one of his favorite Big Band tunes. Each recording had been temporarily pilfered by his children from his personal collection exclusively for the broadcast. Justice Puglia was delighted as he listened to the broadcast with Ingrid and his family. He died about a week later. (To listen to the "Big Band Tribute," go to: http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courts/courtsofappeal/3rdDistrict/justices_former/puglia.htm.)

Justice Puglia recognized that hard work and dedication to the law are essential to our freedom. In short, Justice Puglia knew that freedom is not free, it must be earned and maintained. This was nothing less than his life's work. We are deeply grateful to the Editorial Staff of the McGeorge Law Review in providing this forum of tribute. We invite the reader to explore the remarks and essays that follow and learn about a great lawyer who was a still greater human being. As these tributes indicate, it is possible to be both.

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