



JUSTICE ALBERT M. CRAMPTON
FOURTH DISTRICT

MEMORIAL SERVICES

HELD IN THE SUPREME COURT OF ILLINOIS AT THE SEPTEMBER TERM, 1953, ON THE LIFE, CHARACTER AND PUBLIC SERVICES OF THE LATE MR. JUSTICE ALBERT M. CRAMPTON.

At the hour of one thirty o'clock P.M., September 16, 1953, other business being suspended, the following proceedings were had:

MR. CHIEF JUSTICE SCHAEFER:

This hour has been set aside for the purpose of receiving a memorial concerning the life and public services of the late Mr. Justice Albert M. Crampton. The court will be pleased to hear from the representative of the Rock Island County Bar Association, Mr. Walter J. Klockau, Jr.

MR. WALTER J. KLOCKAU, JR.:

May it please the court—I have the honor to present, on behalf of the Rock Island County Bar Association, a memorial to the memory of JUSTICE ALBERT M. CRAMPTON, who passed away in this city on March 13, 1953, at the age of 53.

Justice Crampton's untimely death ended a career which was consistently marked with honor and distinction. He was born in the City of Moline, Illinois, on January 7, 1900, a son of George W. and Elizabeth Mason Crampton. He remained a lifelong resident of that city. After attending its public schools and graduating from its high school he attended Cornell University, where he received his law degree. He also engaged in special courses of study at the University of Wisconsin and the Harvard Law School. He was admitted to the bar of this State on April 12, 1923, and began the practice of law in his home city.

After eight years of successfully practicing law he was elected, in March of 1931, as judge of the city court of Moline, and was re-elected to that office in March of 1937. During his tenure on the bench Judge Crampton was called to preside in the county, probate and circuit courts of Rock Island County, the city court of Kewanee, and the circuit courts of Henry, Mercer and Cook Counties, as well as the Cook County superior court. In 1943 he voluntarily retired from the bench and resumed the practice of law, which he continued until his election to this court in 1948. He remained a justice of the court, and performed the duties of his office continuously until he was stricken with the heart attack from which he died.

Judge Crampton's activities of public importance were by no means confined to his professional and judicial duties. He was chairman of the executive committee of the Rock Island County Bar Association in 1927 and 1928, served as its vice-president in 1930, and as president in 1945 and 1946. He was also a member of the Board of Governors of the Illinois State Bar Association, representing the Fourth Supreme Court District, from 1945 until 1948. His participation in civic affairs was very extensive. He was frequently called upon to assume leadership in Moline and Rock Island County community organizations and in charitable and welfare work of many kinds. His activities included service as past commander of the Moline Post, American Legion; judge advocate of the 14th district of the Legion; former treasurer Bethany Home orphanage of Rock Island; trustee of Moline high-school students' aid fund; trustee of Moline Field House Association; and director, legal counsel and treasurer of the Moline Area Boy Scouts of America. From 1944 to 1947 Judge Crampton was a member of the Moline Board of Education, and during the last world war he directed the house-to-house canvass in his home city for the pledge of War Bond purchases. He was a member of the First Congregational Church of Moline, and was affiliated with many clubs and fraternal organizations such as the Elks, the Turners, the 40 and 8, and the After Dinner Club. To describe all his activities of public significance would indeed consume more time than is available to me today. The ones I have mentioned, however, afford an indication of the importance and variety of causes with which Judge Crampton concerned himself.

The bare details I have recited, impressive as they are, leave untold the most important and endearing contributions which he made to the welfare of those he left behind. In all his positions of trust and responsibility he was noted not only for his ability but for his unquestioned integrity of character. He was faithful to every confidence reposed in him, and they were many. As a speaker he had few peers. His masterly talents in this respect were widely in demand and he willingly undertook burdens beyond the ordinary requirements of his office. During his term on the Supreme Court, Justice Crampton worked tirelessly and efficiently to uphold and maintain the principles of right upon which our laws are based, and to improve the administration of our judicial system. He had a high regard for the dignity and responsibility of his office, and his thoughts were always concerned with the advancement of justice. At the time of his death he was serving as Chief Justice of the court. He was in the prime of his life, the maturity of his powers, the height of his career. We shall never know the additional heights to which he aspired and which, had he lived his normal span, he would doubtless have achieved. But he left his "Footprints on the sands of time," and his mark will long remain as an influence for good in the law and in his community.

Shakespeare wrote that

"The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones."

If these lines express a general rule, then we must consider Justice Crampton an outstanding exception. For the noble effects of a life such as his do not cease with death. Good men and good influences never die. We need only recall to mind judges like John Marshall and others who gave life and meaning to our budding system of justice; the men who framed our constitution and bill of rights; philosophers like John Locke, from whose writings our forefathers derived many of their ideals; the names of Shakespeare, Milton and countless others of renown to whom we owe our finest concepts of life and justice. From far back in the dimness of antiquity come the names of men whose spirits still live in our constitutions, our judicial decisions, and our way of life today. And so it is with others whose names, perhaps, are

not so widely known but whose contributions to the perpetuation of our most precious values are nevertheless significant. During Justice Crampton's service on this court, brief as it was, many cases of importance in the law were decided. While no matter entrusted to him was too commonplace to receive his meticulous attention, he was unusually interested in cases involving broad and fundamental considerations of justice. He possessed to a marked degree a devotion to the principles of constitutional government, and firmly resisted every attempt to dilute its protections. His opinions for the court will serve not only as a monument to his memory but as a heritage for all who cherish our ideals of liberty and value the just development of law.

The Judge was not only competent and courteous throughout his professional and judicial career, but he possessed a genial, well-balanced personality which was a constant source of pleasure for everyone personally associated with him. He was an entertaining raconteur, with an inexhaustible fund of stories and anecdotes. He enthusiastically engaged in sports and outdoor activities, and greatly enjoyed hunting, fishing, golf and bowling. We may someday forget the importance of his work and the proficiency with which he discharged his professional and public duties. But we shall never forget his friendliness, his smile, his good nature, and the pleasure of his company. His was an infectious, dynamic personality that leaves a lasting mark upon all who were fortunate enough to have known him. While we can no longer enjoy the good fellowship of his company we shall long benefit from his example as a gentleman, and from his contributions to the causes of justice and civic welfare.

No picture of Judge Crampton's life and primary interests could be complete without a mention of his love for his splendid family and his constant concern for their welfare. His devotion to his wife and four children was indeed exceptional, and in itself provides a fitting testimonial to the quality of his character.

The entire adult life of Judge Crampton was one of useful service to his family, as a loving and generous husband and father; to his clients, as a wise and capable counsellor; to his community as a judge and civic leader; and to the State at large as a Justice of the Supreme Court. In each capacity he performed his duties with ability, courtesy and complete fidelity. Indeed, his talents

and character were such as would have assured him success and distinction wherever he chose to direct his energies. Men like Judge Crampton will always be found in positions of leadership in whatever field of human affairs their interests lie. Although many goals toward which he worked were left unreached with his untimely passing, the example he set in constructive effort for worthy causes, and in the fine qualities of his life and character, will remain as an inspiration to all who follow him.

In conclusion I should like to read a poem which, as Judge Crampton often remarked to me, made a profound impression upon him. He liked it so much he had a copy framed many years ago, and hung it on the wall of his office, where it remained at the time of his death. The poem was composed by Hugh R. Porter and is entitled "If I were a Judge." It reads:

"If I were a Judge, it seems to me,
I would strive my level best to be
Humane, but upright—just, but kind,
Meeting all problems with open mind;
Hearing with patience from day to day,
Trials of humans, who passed my way.
I would grant no favors to rich or great,
That were not the due of their just estate;
Nor would I withhold from the humblest slave
The fullest justice—that I might save
Or keep, or hold my place of power,
For a single day, or a single hour.

If I were a Judge, I would keep in mind,
That the purest justice is always blind,
And that no distinctions 'twixt high or low,
Does the 'Goddess of Justice' note or know.
No mortal man be he serf or king,
Would cause me to swerve, nor to grant a thing
That I should withhold—if I knew I should,
Because I thought they were bad or good,
For no man is so bad, and none is so pure,
That we can be always and ever, sure,
That there isn't some virtue, or taint of sin
Mixed up with the other side of him.

If I were a Judge, I'd remember, too,
 That when Life is over, my labors through,
 I, too, must stand at the Judgment seat,
 And the 'God of Justice' be forced to meet;
 And I'd want to feel on that great day
 That none of us know, is so far away,
 That the Lord of Heaven could say to me:
 'Your work was done in sincerity;
 Tho' you've made mistakes, yet I know you've tried
 To be always and ever on Justice side;
 And because of that, all else is forgiven,
 And we welcome you to the Court of Heaven!'"

I think we can say, in viewing the achievements of his life, that Judge Crampton more than lived up to the ideals expressed in that poem, and that we all are richer because he lived among us.

Mr. CHIEF JUSTICE SCHAEFER:

The court will be pleased to hear from the Illinois State Bar Association which is represented by its President, Mr. Timothy I. McKnight.

Mr. TIMOTHY I. MCKNIGHT:

May it please the court—Inadequacy of words properly to express esteem for Justice Albert M. Crampton almost overwhelms me. At the same time, it is an honor to be granted the privilege of making the attempt on behalf of the Illinois State Bar Association.

These remarks will in no sense be biographical in nature. That will be discussed by others. Rather, I desire to sketch the impact which he as a man, as a lawyer, and as a judge left upon this first half of the twentieth century. We alone who were of his acquaintance can best offer by our remembrance a composite likeness of him which will keep him alive in the long time to come.

First, as a man. He was a man in every sense of the word. A great man.

What is greatness? We are accustomed to call great those exceptional beings upon whom heaven has bestowed some of its choicest gifts, which astonish and dazzle by the splendor of phenomenally developed faculties. But this is not the highest conception of greatness. The poise of a well-balanced mind, the bright

insight of a calm judgment, the belief in religion, the generosity of soul, the devotion held and the deeds enacted for public service and the public good, the wonderful sense of humor, are gifts not usually found in one life. They were present in abundance in his life and they combined to produce a great and good man of this, our generation.

Second, as a lawyer. He was a great lawyer. I do not say this from personal observation of him in his offices or at the bar. This is the unanimous consensus of his contemporaries at the bar. His reputation for fair dealing, ethical standards, oratorical brilliance, and devoted loyalty to his clients is more than State-wide. I knew him well enough to assert that his own outlook on and regard for our profession were well expressed by another famous lawyer, Joseph H. Choate, who said:

"I started in life with a belief that our profession in its highest walks afforded the most noble employment in which any man could engage, and I am of the same opinion still. * * * To be a priest and possibly a high priest in the temple of justice, to serve at her altar and aid in her administration, to maintain and defend those inalienable rights of life, liberty, and property upon which the safety of society depends, to succor the oppressed and to defend the innocent, to maintain constitutional rights against all violations whether by the Executives, by the Legislature, by the resistless power of the Press, * * * to rescue the scapegoat and restore him to his proper place in the world—all this seemed to me to furnish a field worthy of any man's ambition."

Lastly, as a judge. He was a great judge. He advanced from a judge of our lowliest court of record to the highest eminence a judge may attain in our State—the crowning achievement of any public-spirited man and lawyer. His written opinions, sound and logical, full of humanness and understanding, are spread upon the records of this honorable court, one of the greatest in the land, where they will buttress and support the common law for the benefit and guidance of the freedom-loving peoples of all the world from now henceforth.

His sun has gone down while it yet was day. But let no one say his contribution to our times was thereby lessened. Some of our greatest composers, authors, statesmen, jurists, dwelt here no longer than he. The usefulness, the greatness, of a life are not

measured in days upon earth, but rather in the heritage left to succeeding generations throughout eternity.

Let us read again Wordsworth's immortal lines, with which I am sure he would agree:

“Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home.”

Mr. CHIEF JUSTICE SCHAEFER:

The court has received with appreciation and with gratitude these observations upon the life of our great colleague. Mr. Justice Daily will respond for the court.

Mr. JUSTICE DAILY:

The court has listened with great interest and satisfaction to the kind words of those who have addressed us today in what they have been pleased to say of our late brother on this bench, Judge Albert M. Crampton.

Our chief justice has asked me to respond on behalf of the court, as being one who had served with Judge Crampton during his entire tenure on the Supreme Court. He and I were elected on the same day in June, 1948, and we were sworn in and assumed our duties on the court on the same day. This period which had encompassed nearly five years up to his untimely death, saw us serving with nine different members of this court, all great lawyers and judges, the association with whom gave Judge Crampton and myself lots of satisfaction and pleasure. Through it all I know that this good man built up among his associates the highest respect and admiration that one could have in their regard for him. I know that I speak for all of them now living, when I express such testimonial of their thoughts regarding our late associate.

Albert Crampton had many splendid traits of character and the most marked was his self-control and uniform courtesy toward

others. He was just, generous and forgiving at all times and under all circumstances. He was of most genial disposition, and was always ready to meet every advance with cordiality. He was warmhearted and sincere, and to those who had won his confidence and esteem he was helpful and kind always.

As a lawyer, Judge Crampton achieved a high reputation among his legal brethren in Rock Island and nearby counties where he practiced his profession, for his careful and painstaking work in behalf of his clients, and for his integrity and uprightness in his dealings with his associates at the bar. His service on the City Court of Moline gave him exalted rank in the estimation of the lawyers in that community. Again, his service during that time upon the courts of Cook County as a visiting judge for many years, gave to this fine man much prestige, and gave to the lawyers of that county a broader view of his ability and judicial attainments which was evidenced when he was to afterward hear and decide so many of their cases as a member of this court.

When this fine gentleman was advanced to the Supreme Court bench, he soon became known and esteemed by the bar throughout the entire State. It was his ruling desire that his duty as a judge should be well performed and that his work, and the work of this court, should merit the approval of the bar and of the people. He was a lover of justice and mercy, and sought to exemplify those attributes of his nature in every cause in which he sat as judge. In the conference room he was the soul of honor and courtesy. He advanced his views with the utmost grace, was tolerant of the opinions of his associates, firm in his convictions, but obedient to the will of the majority when authoritatively expressed. He was jealous of the good name of the court and of his own official reputation. His written opinions, which appear in the volumes starting with 400 Illinois, evince that he was possessed of a vigorous and logical mind; that he was well equipped for patient and impartial investigation of points of law and fact, and capable of grasping and comprehending intricate and complicated legal doctrines and principles, and applying them in aid of the solution of problems given to him to solve. His mind was only satisfied after he had investigated the whole case and honestly and conscientiously believed he had found the correct answer. Having been endowed with sound common sense and knowledge

of the practical affairs of human life, these attributes were used in all his judicial work. His service as Chief Justice of this court and his exercise of the responsibility and duties that go with that position will go down in the history of jurisprudence in this State as a marked memory and record to his honor. His opinions as published will long be regarded as valuable contributions to the legal literature of this State.

Albert Crampton enjoyed life and the companionship and association with his fellows. He was intensely interested in outdoor sports of all kinds, being an ardent golfer, fisherman and hunter. No one enjoyed the conversations that go with and after the participation in such activities more than did he. The buoyant spirit that naturally comes from such outside-of-court interests made our former associate blessed with rare gifts of head and heart, and gave him a human and gracious personality which marks his leaving of us with a deep and keen regret. The generous and unselfish temperament of Albert Crampton's nature, manifested in his associations with his brother lawyers, his neighbors, and his friends, was intensified as a husband and a father into the most unbounded gentleness and love. His home at Moline was ever, at his wish and desire, the gathering place of his many close friends. Nothing seemed to please him more than to entertain there those of us who have been working with him during the past years. This home was presided over by a noble, congenial and loving wife and it was made doubly happy by their four children who gathered around its hearthstone, children than whom there were none greater and more wonderful in the opinion of this good man and father.

To them and to us, his death seems untimely, but we know he met it with unflinching courage and with faith and hope, leaving to his family and the people of his State of Illinois the legacy of an honorable name and an exemplary life.

MR. CHIEF JUSTICE SCHAEFER:

The remarks made here today will be spread upon the records of the court and copies thereof will be transmitted to the family of the late Mr. Justice Crampton by the Reporter of Decisions. As a further mark of respect the Court will stand adjourned until 9:30 o'clock A.M., Thursday, September 17, 1953.

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EDWIN HILL COOKE,
REPORTER OF DECISIONS.

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