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Justice Philip Halpern

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JUSTICE PHILIP HALPERN
New York State Supreme Court
Appellate Division
Fourth Department

JUSTICE PHILIP HALPERN

THE pages that follow sketch the highlights of a legal career of extraordinary variety and fruitfulness. Philip Halpern was endowed with so quick and precise a mind and such intellectual energy that his involvement with the law seems to have been predestined. These endowments were supplemented by the highest standards of rectitude, a warm concern for people, and an intense desire to help in the endless search for solutions to their collective problems. Law as a profession, whatever its failings may be, remains nearly alone in the degree to which it can provide challenging outlets for the pursuit of these interests. Philip Halpern dedicated his entire life to the work of the law in all its various aspects: as practitioner, teacher, scholar, public servant, administrator and judge.

Born in Buffalo in 1902, Justice Halpern attended local schools and graduated from the University of Buffalo School of Law in 1923. After spending a year in New York, he returned to Buffalo to practice and to teach at the law school. Torts and criminal law were the subjects which he taught most often. Regular teaching was reluctantly abandoned in 1944 when he became counsel to the Public Service Commission, although he continued to serve the law school as acting dean and dean until 1947, and again as acting dean in 1952-53.

The years spent by Justice Halpern in the practice of law and teaching were the formative period of his legal career. His exposure to the inexorable demands of actual practice under our adversary system gave him breadth of experience and sharpened his sense of advocacy, two valuable assets which he carried over to his judicial career. At the same time, his extensive activities as a teacher and theorist gave him the more detached scholarly approach to the problems of law which is indispensable for judicial work.

Justice Halpern's election to the New York State Supreme Court in 1947 brought him the fulfillment of his great ambition—to participate as a creative judge in the evolution and molding of the law. His opinions are a lasting monument to his genius.

Justice Halpern's service with the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations carried his name into national and international prominence. His contributions to the guardianship of human rights in a world torn by racial strife and plagued by religious prejudice are eloquent proof of his ability to extend his talents beyond the narrower confines of the law into the widest problem areas of human relations.

Justice Halpern's active career on the bench and as a public servant did not lessen his interest in the law school or his stimulating contacts with the faculty to which he gave generously of his time, wisdom, and administrative experience.

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A plaque in the law school summarizes his abiding contribution to the great work of the law in these words:

In memory of PHILIP HALPERN
Dean and Professor of this Law
School, public servant and judge,
warm friend, who devoted a brilliant
command of the law to the service of
the highest aspirations for human
brotherhood.

J. D. HYMAN, *Dean*
State University of New York
at Buffalo School of Law