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A TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE RICHARD A. GADBOIS, JR.

*Manuel L. Real**

How do you give tribute to the perfect judge—a man of integrity, of wisdom, of understanding, and of wit? Sometimes described as caustic and subtle, it was always expressed to make the point. He, himself, was never excused from his own subtlety. In the case where he struck down a rule requiring clerks in the municipal court to speak only English, he made his point by saying, “This case . . . is vivid testimony that black robes do not by themselves bestow wisdom upon those who wear them.” That is just the way he conducted himself. His treatment of litigants within his obligation to the law was the epitome of fairness and courtesy. He was in all respects a man of integrity.

Judge Gadbois’s desire to be right in decisions and rulings made him widely known as a judge who believed that, as he explained it, “The courts are there to serve litigants, not the other way around.” Whether you were pro se or the client of the Brahmins of the Bar, you got the same intensity from Judge Gadbois’s wisdom, both academically and practically. He was committed to fairness. He was a man of wisdom.

From his training as a seminarian at St. John’s College and his own faith in the humanity of humankind, he understood that the litigative process of the courts was not always a satisfactory solution to the problems he faced in the every day grist of criminal and civil cases. He always looked for a way to do justice, while true to his oath to do equal justice to the rich and to the poor, though he was sometimes tested to the extreme. He was a man of understanding.

As a member of our court he was friend and colleague to us all. To ask Judge Gadbois to do something was to have it done. I remember particularly, while I was Chief Judge, asking him to do what was an arduous and thankless task . . . to write the procedures

* United States District Judge, Central District of California.

to guide our court in death penalty habeas corpus cases. Many before him expressed reluctance to do it. Judge Gadbois embraced the duty and performed it as though eager to have it—it was not that kind of job. That was my good and very close friend. I and the judges of our court will miss him terribly. He leaves, however, a legacy of service and devotion to the law, lawyers, litigants, and our court that merits the respect and love of us all.

May God bless you and keep you in the palm of His hand, dear friend.