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# Tribute to the Honorable Ronald D. Castille

*Chief Justice Thomas G. Saylor\**

I am honored to make a few prefatory comments to commence the *Duquesne Law Review's* tribute to Chief Justice Ronald D. Castille.

Before he became a lawyer and a jurist, Chief Justice Castille was a rifle platoon leader in Vietnam, where his distinguished service to his country during the war was characterized by leadership, valor, and, ultimately, great personal sacrifice. Ron came to Philadelphia in 1967, initially to recuperate from his injuries. In this same city in which our frame of national government was originally conceived, Chief Justice Castille launched his own forty-three year career advancing the administration of justice in the Commonwealth. This period encompasses Ron's service as an assistant district attorney, the District Attorney of Philadelphia, an attorney in private practice, a Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, and, most recently, our Chief Justice.

During his tenure with the court, Chief Justice Castille made his mark on the adjudicative side through his authorship of more than four hundred majority opinions. He has written numerous seminal opinions shaping the law pertaining to the Pennsylvania Constitution,<sup>1</sup> torts,<sup>2</sup> criminal offenses,<sup>3</sup> the environment,<sup>4</sup> education,<sup>5</sup> labor

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\* Chief Justice, Pennsylvania Supreme Court

1. *See, e.g.*, *Holt v. 2011 Legislative Reapportionment Comm'n*, 67 A.3d 1211 (Pa. 2013); *Commonwealth v. Russo*, 934 A.2d 1199 (Pa. 2007); *Stilp v. Commonwealth*, 905 A.2d 918 (Pa. 2006); *Theodore v. Del. Valley Sch. Dist.*, 836 A.2d 76 (Pa. 2003); *Pap's A.M. v. City of Erie*, 812 A.2d 591 (Pa. 2002).

2. *See, e.g.*, *Tincher v. Omega Flex, Inc.*, 104 A.3d 328 (Pa. 2014); *Bilt-Rite Contractors, Inc. v. Architectural Studio*, 866 A.2d 270 (Pa. 2005); *Althaus ex rel. Althaus v. Cohen*, 756 A.2d 1166 (Pa. 2000).

3. *See, e.g.*, *Commonwealth v. Shiffler*, 879 A.2d 185 (Pa. 2005); *Commonwealth v. Freeman*, 827 A.2d 385 (Pa. 2003); *Commonwealth v. Burke*, 781 A.2d 1136 (Pa. 2001); *Commonwealth v. Glass*, 754 A.2d 655 (Pa. 2000); *Commonwealth v. Bing*, 713 A.2d 56 (Pa. 1998).

4. *See, e.g.*, *Robinson Twp. v. Washington Cnty.*, 83 A.3d 901 (Pa. 2014); *Adams Sanitation Co. v. DER*, 715 A.2d 390 (Pa. 1998); *Machipongo Land & Coal Co. v. DER*, 676 A.2d 199 (Pa. 1996).

5. *See, e.g.*, *Knox v. Bd. of Sch. Dirs. of Susquenita Sch. Dist.*, 888 A.2d 640 (Pa. 2005).

relations,<sup>6</sup> zoning,<sup>7</sup> taxation,<sup>8</sup> utilities,<sup>9</sup> elections,<sup>10</sup> families,<sup>11</sup> access to public records,<sup>12</sup> workers' compensation,<sup>13</sup> insurance,<sup>14</sup> oil and gas,<sup>15</sup> judicial conduct,<sup>16</sup> and attorney discipline.<sup>17</sup> Ron also has been no stranger to concurrences and dissents, for that matter. Indeed, some of the positions that he advanced in responsive opinions, through the years, ultimately became the law of the Commonwealth.<sup>18</sup>

From an administrative standpoint, among his many other attainments, Chief Justice Castille directed the reduction of civil case backlogs, led efforts toward juvenile-justice reform, spearheaded implementation of stronger codes regulating judicial conduct, saw to the implementation of measures to fast track family law matters, managed the expansion of public access to information, helped develop teachers' institutions to promote understanding of the court system, and steered many initiatives to improve the court system in the First Judicial District. Throughout his life's work, Ron has also been unwavering in his advocacy in support of civil legal aid programs for the indigent and pro bono legal assistance.

Also of special significance has been Chief Justice Castille's leadership in ensuring adequate funding for our judicial system through difficult economic times. As a result, Pennsylvania courts have not suffered the sorts of closures and impingements on access to justice impacting other states. Ron recently put it this way: "We've been

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6. See, e.g., *City of Phila. v. Int'l Ass'n of Firefighters*, Local 22, 999 A.2d 555 (Pa. 2010); *Pa. Turnpike Comm'n v. Commonwealth*, 899 A.2d 1085 (Pa. 2006); *Pa. Sch. Bd. Ass'n v. PSERB*, 863 A.2d 432 (Pa. 2004); *Uniontown Area Sch. Dist. v. PLRB*, 732 A.2d 607 (Pa. 1999).

7. See, e.g., *Smalley v. Zoning Hearing Bd. of Middletown Twp.*, 834 A.2d 535 (Pa. 2003); *Hertzberg v. ZBA of Pittsburgh*, 721 A.2d 43 (Pa. 1998).

8. See, e.g., *Clifton v. Allegheny Cnty.*, 969 A.2d 1197 (Pa. 2009).

9. See, e.g., *Poplowsky v. PUC*, 910 A.2d 38 (Pa. 2006); *MCI WorldCom, Inc. v. PUC*, 844 A.2d 1239 (Pa. 2004).

10. See, e.g., *In re Carroll*, 896 A.2d 566 (Pa. 2006); *In re Canvass of Absentee Ballots of Nov. 4, 2003 Gen. Election*, 843 A.2d 1223 (Pa. 2004).

11. See, e.g., *Chen v. Chen*, 893 A.2d 87 (Pa. 2006); *C.B. ex rel. R.R.M. v. DPW*, 786 A.2d 176 (Pa. 2001); *Fish v. Behers*, 741 A.2d 721 (Pa. 1999).

12. See, e.g., *Sapp Roofing Co. v. Sheet Metal Workers' Int'l Ass'n, Local Union No. 12*, 713 A.2d 627 (Pa. 1998) (Opinion Announcing the Judgment of the Court).

13. See, e.g., *Reifsnnyder v. WCAB*, 883 A.2d 537 (Pa. 2005); *Hannaberry HVAC v. WCAB*, 834 A.2d 524 (Pa. 2003); *Ryan v. WCAB*, 707 A.2d 1130 (Pa. 1998).

14. See, e.g., *Donnelly v. Bauer*, 720 A.2d 447 (Pa. 1998); *Eichelman v. Nationwide Ins. Co.*, 711 A.2d 1006 (Pa. 1998).

15. See, e.g., *Jacobs v. CNG Transmission Corp.*, 772 A.2d 445 (Pa. 2001).

16. See, e.g., *In re Bruno*, 101 A.3d 635 (Pa. 2014).

17. See, e.g., *In re Greenberg*, 749 A.2d 434 (Pa. 2000).

18. See, e.g., *In re Paulmier*, 937 A.2d 364, 370–71 (Pa. 2007) (vindicating a position then-Justice Castille had maintained from a responsive posture throughout a series of election-law cases).

able to, by clawing and scratching, fully fund the courts.”<sup>19</sup> His efforts, however characterized, reflect one of his signature achievements, of which Ron can be very proud.

As is apparent from the above, our modern Chief Justice, by tradition and imperative, fulfills a number of important roles. He or she has tremendous administrative responsibility in terms of the functioning of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court and our Unified Judicial System. The Chief Justice serves as our judiciary’s liaison with his counterparts in our forty-nine sister states and, finally, the Chief Justice is in many respects the public face of the Pennsylvania judiciary.

Ronald Castille assumed the office of Chief Justice on January 8, 2008, upon the retirement of Chief Justice Ralph Cappy. In doing so, he became, by my count, the fifty-fifth Chief Justice of our Court. As Ron has been very fond of observing, the Supreme Court traces its lineage back to the Provincial Court established by William Penn in 1684, and the Supreme Court established by the Judiciary Act of 1722.

Having served with Chief Justice Castille for the past seventeen years, I have observed firsthand his persistent and tireless public and personal efforts to advance the fair and timely administration of justice; his strong advocacy in defense of judicial independence; and his unceasing commitment to the adequate provision of legal services for the less fortunate. The bench, bar, and citizens of the Commonwealth have been well served by Ron’s tenure, and it is most fitting that the *Duquesne Law Review* has dedicated this issue to recognize his achievements.

I offer my sincerest expressions of gratitude to Chief Justice Castille for his remarkable contributions, and to the *Duquesne Law Review* for providing this opportunity for reflection upon them. That said, I will defer to Dean Gormley to introduce the impressive array of authors and articles presented in this volume, which I take pleasure in commending for review.

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19. P.J. D’Annunzio, *After 21 Years on the Supreme Court Bench, Castille Retires*, THE LEGAL INTELLIGENCER (Jan. 5, 2015), <http://www.thelegalintelligencer.com/id=1202713846132?keywords=After+21+Years+on+the+Supreme+Court+Bench+Castille+Retires&publication=The+Legal+Intelligencer>.

