

**TRIBUTE  
TO  
THE HONORABLE JOHN F. GERRY\***

*Thomas R. Curtin\*\**

In the days before my swearing-in as the President of the New Jersey State Bar Association, I asked Judge Gerry for some advice. He told me, "Be Yourself. But, since 'yourself' is a jackass, be someone else."

One night shortly before his death, I decided I would be Jack Gerry for a night and tried it out in his home ballpark, Camden County. I used his deadpan style, his Jack Benny timing, his best material — "Its not only a pleasure to be here tonight, it's a goddamed inconvenience." "I'm a swell guy, you should really get to know me." "Steve Orlofsky has so much to be humble about." I tried some of my own material. "Jack Gerry is only sixty-eight, but he reads at a seventy-year-old level." "I don't know where Jack finished at Princeton, but I do know that without him, there would have been no top half of the class." When I finished, someone said, "I know Jack Gerry, he's a friend of mine. You're no Jack Gerry," proving what I already knew; he was an original. There will never be another, just imitators like me.

Jack's gone now. He didn't die, he just ran out of fun. He's taken his act to a heavenly vaudeville. He's got a new audience now. Heaven is perfect for Jack — no Appellate Judges and millions who haven't heard any of his material. In the brief time he's been there, he's had them all smiling. He did it while he was with us, and God knows we need something to smile about.

You made us laugh, Jack, mostly at ourselves, but that's what an Irish song and dance man does, isn't it? We miss you.

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\*The following is an adaptation of remarks made at the Camden County Bar Association dinner honoring Judge Gerry.

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