

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION OF THE ALLEN COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

THE HONORABLE FRANK J. CELAREK

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Mr. Chairman, Judges, fellow members of the Allen County Bar Association, distinguished friends.

This morning we are gathered to pay our respects to the memory of our colleague, Frank J. Celarek who passed away on Thursday June 21, 1990. Frank was a Jurist and lawyer who performed with pride. Frank was a member of a community that he never stopped serving.

Judge Celarek was born on November 15, 1919 into a family that struggled through the depression years with little material wealth, and Judge Celarek developed a "work ethic" from an early age. A strong willed person, Frank determined in his early years that he would make a success of his life regardless of his modest background and the financial obstacles which were placed in his way as a Fort Wayne youth.

Judge Celarek attended elementary school at Saint Hyacinth's Catholic School where the priests, nuns and most of the parish congregation spoke a great deal of Polish as a first language. In 1938 he graduated from Central High School in Fort Wayne. He did not attend Central Catholic High School because of an inability to raise the tuition which was necessary to enroll in the private parochial school system at the time.

Frank knew he would be unable to attend college unless he earned his way. Butler University provided an athletic scholarship to Frank based on his outstanding basketball talent, and Frank enrolled in the Indianapolis based institution in the fall of 1938. Tragedy struck the young Celarek during his college years. An automobile accident left Frank injured and blind in his left eye.

The determined young student enrolled in Butler with the help of the athletic department, continued his studies and graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in the summer of 1943. In September of 1943 Frank entered the Indiana University School of Law and completed his studies in June of 1946, culminating in a Bachelor of Law Degree from Indiana.

Frank started his law practice in Fort Wayne and in early 1950 joined the law firm of Colerick, Corbett, Adair and Beers. In 1956 Frank joined Otto Bonahoom in the practice of law and remained associated with Otto until elected Judge of the Allen Superior Court in 1965.

Frank married Marian E. Blasengym and established his home on the South side of Fort Wayne. Frank and Marian had three sons, Frank Jr., Kevin and James, and one daughter, Patricia. Marian and

the children survive him.

Frank established his law practice at the Lincoln Tower and during the late 1950's and early 1960's spent the long hours necessary to build a practice in order to support his growing family. In this effort, Frank was driven by a desire to build his practice the only way he knew how - appealing to people from humble backgrounds and from humble surroundings. He would not only become their counselor but he would become their friend. In most cases, he also became their fellow lodge member.

Frank joined nearly every organization that was authorized to exist in this State for any reason whatsoever. Without a doubt, no person, and certainly no lawyer, will ever equal Frank for memberships in private and quasi-private clubs and organizations where middle class people gathered to engage in social and charitable endeavors.

He was a member, and served as President or Officer of many, of the following organizations: B.P.O.E. Number 155; Knights of Columbus; Fourth Degree of the Knights of Columbus; Elmhurst Little League; Broadview Terrace Association; Downtown Sertoma Club; Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce; Allen County United Nations War Relief Fund; The Gyro Club; The Polish National Alliance; The Junior Chamber of Commerce; The Estate Planning Council; The Fort Wayne Board of Realtors; Mad Anthonys; The Indiana Amateur Athletic Union; The Y.M.C.A.; The American Bar Association; the State of Indiana Bar Association; the Allen County Bar Association; and somehow the Marion County Bar Association; the Indiana Judges Association; Toastmasters' International; the Moose Lodge; the Fort Wayne Elk's Lodge; The Waynedale Lions' Club; The Fraternal Order of Eagles; and the American Institute of Parliamentarians. Frank was also the founder, incorporator, and first President of the Olive Club, a social club located above the Pelz Reception Hall on Freeman Street near Indian Village.

In 1968 Frank served as Chairman and Grand Marshall of the 13th Annual Hibernian's Ball. In order to be a Hibernian one must have at least 50% Irish Blood in his veins - to this day no one can explain just how Frank, 100% Polish, became a member of Hibernians. Nonetheless, he chaired the lavish ball in 1968. The Hibernians never had another ball thereafter in Allen County.

Frank always wanted to help others and was a tireless worker for his family, his church, and his many interests in the variety of organizations to which he belonged. He established a Scholarship Fund for needy students at Bishop Luers High School in Fort Wayne. He raised funds annually for Leader Dog Training Programs throughout Northeastern Indiana. Every time Frank called, you could rest assured that he was either recruiting new members for some worthwhile organization, inviting you to play golf, or raising money for a charity. A kind and thoughtful gentleman, he made a regular practice of remembering birthdays and anniversaries of family, friends and colleagues and of writing letters of

congratulation to those whose names or pictures may have appeared in the newspaper.

Judge Celarek became a Superior Court Judge in 1965 at a time when a partisan election was necessary in order to ascend to the Bench. Frank had served the Republican Party as a precinct worker, ward chairman, fund raiser, and delegate to several State conventions and was rewarded by becoming the Republican candidate for Judge in the fall of 1964. Judge Celarek served honorably on the bench for over 20 years.

Judge Celarek took pride in initiating new procedures in the Superior Court System - especially in the administration of estates. His post card reminder system is still being used by the Court as a means of prodding lawyers to complete estate work with reasonable speed and diligence. Frank often joked that he was fortunate that he was not required to practice under those same rules prior to his election to the Bench.

In 1985, Frank retired as Superior Court Judge and returned to the private practice. Not having been known as a lawyer who provided especially fast and prompt service, Frank picked up nearly where he had left off some twenty years prior. Several of his old estates had not been closed and Frank resumed work on the files having barely missed a beat during the passing years.

Judge Celarek will long be remembered in Allen County and in Fort Wayne as a person of strong determination and an insatiable desire to serve when asked by his friends and colleagues. He was a man that could counsel with solid "common sense" advice and could also show great compassion and sympathy to less fortunate people who appeared in his Court or sought him out for help. He was a man of insight into the working people of Fort Wayne and a man of integrity who was devoted to his family and to the law profession that he was so proud to serve.

All of us who knew Frank will have been better for that fond experience and fond memory. Those of us who did not know Frank are better for his having been a part of this community. We will all miss his influence and his presence in our lives.

BE IT RESOLVED, therefore that the Allen County Bar Association give public expression of sorrow upon this, the occasion of the death of the Honorable Frank J. Celarek; and

BE IT RESOLVED, that this Resolution be unanimously passed by those present at this assembly upon this occasion; and

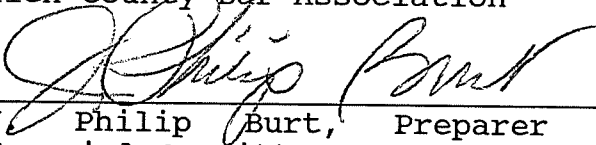
BE IT RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted by the Office of the Bar Association to the members of the Celarek family; and

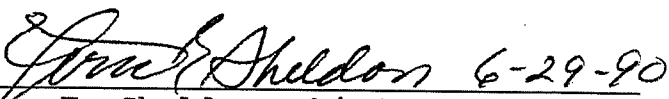
BE IT RESOLVED, that this Resolution be spread of record in the permanent records of the Courts of Allen County to evidence the

respect and affection of the members of the Bar and Bench for their departed brother, Frank J. Celarek.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Allen County Bar Association

By:   
J. Philip Burt, Preparer for  
Memorial Committee

By:   
Vern E. Sheldon, Chief Judge  
Allen Superior Court