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# MEMORIAL FOR FRANCIS X. SWIETLIK

JAMES D. GHIARDI\*

Francis X. Swietlik graduated from the Marquette University Law School with an LL.B. degree in 1914. His active association with the Law School continued as teacher, dean, and adjunct professor until June 1967. At that time he was named Dean Emeritus, maintaining his interest in the Law School's growth and progress until his death December 12, 1983.

From 1914 until May 1917, Francis Swietlik was affiliated with the Milwaukee law firm of Churchill, Bennett, and Churchill; then he entered the military service and remained there for two years. He saw overseas duty in France in World War I and served as captain of artillery in the United States Army. At the end of the war, he returned to Milwaukee to begin the practice of law and entered into a partnership with George Burns of Milwaukee under the firm name of Swietlik and Burns. During this period, he also served as Special Assistant District Attorney of Milwaukee County.

After a successful career in private practice, he was appointed Dean of the Marquette University Law School in September 1933 and took over the office of Dean in February 1934. He served as Dean until the end of 1953 when he was elected circuit judge and served on the bench until he retired in 1960, after which time he was a reserve circuit judge and also served for six years as Chair of the Milwaukee Police and Fire Commission. Upon retirement from the bench, he returned to the practice of law in Milwaukee County and maintained an active practice until he closed his office and retired in 1975 at the age of eighty-seven.

In 1966 Judge Swietlik was given the Pere Marquette Award for over fifty years of service to the University and the Law School. The citation reads as follows:

For 50 years of inspiring and devoted teaching in the Law School of Marquette University, combining skillfully theoretical and applied learning to achieve true excellence in professional instruction; for 18 years of service as distinguished Dean of the Law School; for his well earned reputation as a

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leading authority on the law of Evidence; for his unflagging industry and enthusiasm for professional discourse and debate, even into the eighth decade of his energetic life; for his humanitarianism in bringing aid and sustenance to over 2,000,000 Polish victims of Nazi terror during World War II, which merited him, among other recognitions, the Knighthood of St. Gregory; for an outstanding career on the Circuit bench of Milwaukee County; for the discharge of his professional, religious and civic obligations in accordance with the highest ideals of Marquette University and in such exemplary manner as to demonstrate to all who have been privileged to know him, including 3 generations of Marquette law students, the full scope of the professional responsibility of a lawyer; for a lifetime of devotion to the great motto *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*, Judge Francis X. Swietlik has merited from Marquette University a special Pere Marquette award.

In addition to his interests in teaching and the legal profession, Judge Swietlik was long active in Polish affairs. In 1933 he was given the highest honorary post in the Polish National Alliance, that of Grand Censor. He continued in this post until after World War II. One of his outstanding service contributions involved being Chair of the Committee for Polish War Relief during World War II. The object of the committee was to send relief to all Polish war refugees throughout the world. He spent a good deal of time in Europe arranging for the relief of Polish people before the country fell into the Communist sphere of influence and subsequent thereto until the fall of the Nazi state. This effort caused Pope Pius XII to confer on him the Knighthood of St. Gregory and the awarding of an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree by Creighton University.

The Marquette Law Review dedicated volume 52 to Francis X. Swietlik. Dean Robert F. Boden described his loyalty to the Law School as follows:

He has always been ready to give freely and voluntarily of his time for the sake of the school and, of course, this has been the pattern of his life. I think it can be said that concern for and service to his Alma Mater has been one of the most important factors in shaping the long life of Judge Swietlik.

Despite his many administrative, professional, and humanitarian activities, Frank Swietlik had one primary goal, to

be a "good teacher." As a former student of his, I can tell you he was demanding, prepared, dedicated, and had the ability to communicate the theoretical and practical skills necessary for the practice of law. During his eighteen year tenure as Dean of the Marquette University Law School, he taught a demanding number of classes: Contracts in the first year, Evidence in the second year, and Constitutional Law in the third year. His knowledge of Evidence is legendary, and his understanding of the Constitution and its application to our society illustrated his scholarship. As Dean Boden stated in his dedication to volume 52 of the Marquette Law Review:

He is, in every respect, a gentleman and scholar of the law. His unselfish involvement in community, national and even international affairs, and his concern for the future course of the law, set patterns for all of us who follow him in the profession. His contributions to the profession and to the community provide a living exhibit of what is meant when we refer to the professionally responsible lawyer.

Dean Swietlik was a devoted family man. He and his wife, Marie, had six children. Four sons are members of the bar. Three of them practice law in Milwaukee County and one is a judge in Ozaukee County. His two daughters live in the Milwaukee area and are active in community affairs. Recently, a grandson graduated from Marquette University Law School, so the legal tradition of the Swietlik family will continue for generations. His devoted and understanding wife, Marie, survives him, and we wish her many years of health and happiness.

As a former student, colleague, and friend of Francis X. Swietlik, I can state that my own professional and personal lives were greatly influenced by the Dean. We maintained close contact until his death. His parting words to us were "au revoir," reminding us of his mastery of Greek, Latin, French, Spanish, Italian, and Polish. The Law School, the profession, the community, his friends and his family feel the loss of his death, but on the other hand the world is a much better place for having had Francis X. Swietlik for ninety-four years.