

# *News Advisory*

From the Rhode Island Judiciary



## **Retired Chief Judge Jeremiah dies**

**July 20, 2015:** Retired Family Court Chief Judge Jeremiah S. Jeremiah Jr., credited with initiating numerous specialized programs during his tenure in the court that handles juvenile crime and domestic relations, died on Sunday morning, July 19. He was 80 years old.

Jeremiah retired from the bench in 2010, after serving as chief judge since 1987. He had been appointed in 1986 as an associate justice of the Family Court by then Governor Edward D. DiPrete, whom Jeremiah had served as executive counsel from 1984 to 1986. Jeremiah had also worked in the Cranston City Solicitor's office from 1963 to 1984, serving in the top position since 1978.

Under Jeremiah's leadership, the Family Court initiated specialized calendars for juvenile and family drug treatment, truancy, mental health, and domestic violence. He was nationally recognized for his innovative approaches to juveniles and families in distress.

"The Family Court's problem-solving calendars are evidence of Chief Judge Jeremiah's creative leadership, but first and foremost he was a family man," said Rhode Island Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul A. Suttell, who served as an associate justice in the Family Court for 13 years with Chief Judge Jeremiah. "It was his love and respect of children that he brought to his work in the court. In all his decisions involving wayward or delinquent children, he was always motivated by what he believed was necessary and in the best interest of the particular child who appeared before him. I never knew him to give up on a child. He drew upon every resource available to the court to give a child the opportunity to lead a productive life. He had a positive influence on countless youths throughout his career."

State Court Administrator J. Joseph Baxter, a former Family Court administrator under Jeremiah, cited the chief judge's dedication to helping troubled children get out of the child welfare system and into stable homes.

"He was a champion for kids," said Family Court Administrator Ronald Pagliarini. "He would push the limits and do whatever he could for a child in trouble."

In July 2005, Jeremiah was presented the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges' "Judge of the Year Award" for meritorious service to the juvenile courts, children and families of America. The American Bar Association also awarded Judge

Jeremiah with the Scripps Howard Foundation's "Distinguished Service to Literacy Award."

Chief Judge Jeremiah received his undergraduate and law degrees from Boston University. He is survived by his wife, Theresa, and three daughters. Funeral arrangements are incomplete.

# # #