



CAMDEN COUNTY
BAR ASSOCIATION

Law School Student Scholarship Descriptions

Benjamin Asbell Memorial Awards

Benjamin Asbell was born in 1909 in Camden and attended Camden High School. Upon graduation he was admitted to the first class at South Jersey Law School (later Rutgers Law School) in 1927. Upon graduation he had to wait to take the Bar Examination because he was not yet 21 years old. He took the Bar and passed in 1930, opening a practice in Camden. He practiced for the next 57 years during which time he served as an assistant Camden County prosecutor and the head prosecutor from 1958, until 1960 when Prosecutor Mitchell H. Cohen was appointed to the bench. He was the youngest President in the history of the Camden County Bar Association in 1949, and remained such until his son, Samuel Asbell, became President in 1983. Benjamin Asbell was a superb, well respected practicing attorney until the day he died, actually trying a divorce case two weeks before his death at age 77.

Eivind H. Barth, Jr. Memorial Award

Eivind (who usually was referred to as "Ave") graduated from Collingswood High School, Temple University and Temple Law School. He served in the U.S. Army JAG Corps and was active in the United Methodist Church, the Brooks-Irvine Memorial Football Club, the Camden County YMCA and Tavistock Country Club. Eivind was a leader within the Camden County Bar, serving as an officer and ultimately as president of the Association and also as a trustee of the Camden County Bar Foundation. He spent much of his practice in his hometown of Collingswood with the firm of Finnegan & Barth.

Hon. Joseph W. Cowgill Memorial Award

Joseph Cowgill was born and raised in Camden, graduating from Camden High School and then from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School and its law school. Upon graduation, he opened a Camden law practice. He became very involved in local politics, serving as a Camden County Freeholder, Camden County Surrogate, New Jersey State Assemblyman and ultimately a New Jersey State Senator. As a state senator, Sen. Cowgill served two terms as minority leader. He was the chairman of the county Democrat Party for an extended period and was a strong supporter of President John F. Kennedy's campaign and he became a welcome guest at the White House. During his later years, Sen. Cowgill was a leader of the Delaware River Port Authority. Sen. Cowgill was a former president of the Camden County Bar Association and received its highest honor, the Peter J. Devine, Jr. Award. He also was a trustee of the United Fund and served on the board of directors of United Jersey Bank. Although an Episcopalian, Sen. Cowgill was called upon to chair a committee charged with raising funds to stave off the possible collapse of the Catholic schools in Camden County.

Hon. Ralph W.E. Donges Memorial Award

Ralph Waldo Emerson Donges – May 5, 1975 – September 21, 1974 – age 99 – was born in Pennsylvania and resided in Camden, Collingswood and Oaklyn, New Jersey. In his late twenties he studied law with a lawyer, read for the bar and commenced practice in Camden. Following in his doctor father's footsteps, he became interested in community affairs and politics. Donges served as legal aide to Woodrow Wilson prior to his election as president. The year 1913 saw him as presiding officer of the Loyal Order of Moose, he was a Freemason, and member of Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, in addition to various bar memberships.

As World War I approached, he became a member of the Camden City Draft Board and the Public Safety Committee. In 1918 he joined the Army and rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. From 1920 he served the state's judicial system as a Circuit Judge until 1930 when he was named an Associate Justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court. After the Constitutional Convention of 1948, which changed the New Jersey Court system, he became a member of the Camden County Superior Court. In business, he was a founding member of the South Camden Trust Company and served as its first president in 1921.

In recognition of Ralph W.E. Donges' service, subsequent to his death, Camden County Bar Association established the Ralph W.E. Donges Memorial Scholarship Award to be given annually to an evening student attending Philadelphia Metropolitan area and New Jersey area law schools. In response to changing demographics, in 2008 the committee redefined the criteria from "evening student" to "part-time student".

DuBois Brothers Award

As much as they resembled brothers in appearance, Josiah, Herbert and Madison DuBois enjoyed accomplished, but in many ways very different, careers. After each graduated from the University of Pennsylvania Law School in 1934, 1936 and 1939, respectively, they embarked on initially divergent paths before they joined each other in the Camden law firm known now as DuBois, Sheehan, Hamilton, Levin & Weissman.

Josiah ("Joe") was an attorney at the U.S. Dept. of Treasury working under Secretary Henry Morgenthau in the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. During the holocaust, Joe was appalled at the United States' failure to aide Jews trying to escape Nazi Europe and put his career at risk by writing the scathing Report to the Secretary on the Acquiescence of This Government in the Murder of the Jews. Secretary Morgenthau presented this report to President Roosevelt which led to the establishment of the War Refugee Board in 1944. Joe was appointed General Counsel of that board and then was assigned as deputy chief counsel for War Crimes where he spent two years in Nuremberg, Germany prosecuting I.G. Farben, the company that supplied the Nazis with the deadly chemicals. Joe, who was not Jewish, has been included in many documentaries about the holocaust and has been honored for saving the lives of countless European Jews.

Herbert ("Herb") DuBois began practicing law as a solo practitioner and developed a specialty in real estate law. Indeed, during his career he estimated that he represented clients in more than 10,000 real estate closings. Like Joe, Herb served his country with distinction during World War II. After graduating from Officer Candidate School, Herb was a leader of rifle platoon combat in northern France. He later became a legal officer advising on policies and procedures for military government financial control of occupied Germany. Herb received many military ribbons and certificates of merit. Upon returning home, Herb and Joe became law partners, with Joe serving as a litigator and Herb spending most of his career working with and for home builders, both as a developer of apartments and houses, and individually as

a founder of both a title company and the mortgage company appropriately named Builders Mortgage Company.

Madison ("Matt") DuBois was the quiet younger brother who served our country fighting in the trenches in Italy as the Allied Forces freed that country from the grip of Mussolini and the Nazis. He initially practiced law with a Philadelphia law firm before he joined Herb and Joe at DuBois & DuBois in 1950. The focus of the practice for the firm's first four decades was real estate, and Matt served as primary outside counsel for several of the largest home builders in southern New Jersey, most notably Scarborough Corporation, one of the most influential developers in the region. Real estate was an area of the law Matt embraced and one to which he dedicated most of his career.

Thomas S. Higgins In Memoriam Award

Tom Higgins was born into a rooming home in Camden where he spent his early years cared for by his mother and older brother. As he matured, he helped the family finances by selling house trailers. At Camden Catholic High School, Tom was the captain of a nationally recognized debate team, a skill he continued to employ during his days at Saint Joseph's University. After graduating from Villanova Law School, Tom was one of the first ever judicial law clerks in Camden County. Shortly after he began his legal career working for Thomas McGuire, Tom at age 28 was appointed the judge of Gloucester Township Municipal Court. He served as an assistant Camden County prosecutor, ran for United States Congress, and became a Camden County Freeholder. Tom was a friend and advisor to Governor Jim Florio and worked on the finance committee for each of his gubernatorial campaigns. During his career, Tom developed an expertise in environmental law and represented such diverse entities as municipal utilities authorities, the Delaware River Port Authority and the New Jersey Turnpike Authority. He was certified by the New Jersey Supreme Court as a civil trial attorney and spent a considerable portion of his career as the managing partner of the firm he founded, Higgins, Slachetka & Long. He also was a successful businessman and was an avid golfer often finding matches with friends at Tavistock Country Club.

George F. Kugler, Jr. Award

Born in Woodbury in 1925, Mr. Kugler enlisted in the United States Navy immediately upon graduation from high school in 1943. He served on an aircraft carrier in the Pacific Ocean during the rest of World War II. After discharge he graduated from Temple University and then Rutgers School of Law. He began his legal career in 1954 with the law firm that is now Brown & Connery. From 1970-74, Kugler served as Attorney General of New Jersey. After that he was a partner and then shareholder in what is now known as Archer Law until his retirement in 2000. While practicing law, Kugler was appointed by various Governors and Chiefs Justice to serve on numerous committees and commissions. He died in 2004.

Chris Mourtos Memorial Award

For 33 years, Chris Mourtos owned the Coastline restaurant, a Cherry Hill institution that was much more than a place for dining. Because Chris had a very real commitment to the community, particularly those less fortunate than he, there were so many ways he found to use his restaurant to benefit others. Among the beneficiaries of Chris' caring ways were police officers, firefighters, military organizations and the Camden County Bar Foundation, the charitable arm of the county bar association. For decades, Chris opened the doors of the Coastline early on the first Saturday in December so that the Camden County Bar Foundation could bus in hundreds of children from shelters, inner city schools and groups dedicated to helping children in need and entertain them in true holiday fashion. The Bar Foundation arranged a magic show and a visit with Santa (who had a striking resemblance to U.S. District Judge Joseph Rodriguez). Elves helped Santa hand out holiday gifts and each child left with a photo of her/him

on Santa's lap. Chris, however, did more than open the doors; he opened his heart and brought in staff to serve the children a sumptuous Coastline breakfast. After his passing, the Camden County Bar Foundation established a scholarship it awards each year to a deserving law student, a fitting tribute to such a generous man.

Louis C. Portella Memorial Award

Louis Portella was born in 1933, and resided in Camden, NJ. He was affectionately known as "Lou" or "Louie" to his friends. After completing college, he attended Rutgers Law School – Camden for 2 years, and then transferred to and graduated from Temple Law School. He was admitted to the New Jersey Bar in 1957.

For most of his legal career, Lou was a solo practitioner with a general practice, and mainly specialized in plaintiff's personal injury matters, municipal court, and wills and estates. He lived in Cherry Hill, NJ, was involved in local politics and the Camden County Bar Association, was an active member in the Republican party, and held political appointments such as solicitor of Camden County towns. Lou loved history, war movies, politics, and being Italian. He often attended and participated in the swearing in ceremonies of Italian immigrants who obtained their United States citizenship.

Lou was well-respected in the legal community and was known for his outstanding legal skills, outgoing and friendly personality, and his ability to make people laugh.

He passed away in 1991 at the age of 57. He was survived by his wife, Constance, who passed away in 2017, and his three sons, Louis, Jr., Matthew, and R.J.

Hon. Rudolph J. Rossetti Memorial Award

Rudolph J. Rossetti was born and raised in Camden New Jersey and, although he started out in graduating vocational school an auto mechanic, he went on to Rutgers University and Rutgers law school in Camden. Following law school, he joined the Camden County Prosecutors office as an assistant prosecutor. He later founded his own very successful law firm, Rossetti and Rose. In 1975, he was appointed by the governor to the bench in Camden County. He presided over both civil and criminal cases for many years before becoming the presiding judge of civil and then assignment judge of Camden County. He worked very closely with the Chief Justice and was the driving force behind the development of differentiated case management which laid the foundation for how all cases in the state of New Jersey are now handled by the court. His brother Leonard and son Andrew are both practicing attorneys in Camden County.

Daniel B. Toll Memorial Award

Daniel B. Toll was a Lawyer, Banker, Developer, Philanthropist, and Humanitarian. Born and reared in Camden, New Jersey, he worked, during his teenage years in his father's tailor shop. After serving during World War II. he earned his Bachelor's Degree in Finance and open a professional accounting practice. Never satisfied, Danny went to law school at night, eventually earning his law degree and starting a Law Practice in the City of Camden. At the time of his death, he was still the Senior Partner of the successor law firm, Toll, Sullivan & Luthman.

In the early 1960's, he, along with a small group of civic-minded volunteers, helped found John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital which has grown from a 100- bed hospital to a multi-hospital system with acute-care divisions in Stratford, Cherry Hill and Washington Township, NJ and which has been nationally recognized for its clinical performance and which is a now part of Thomas Jefferson

University. Additionally, Danny established Fidelity Bank & Trust Company, and served as its Board Chair from founding until it was acquired by UJB/South which ultimately became part of the Bank of America. Danny famously exulted that he “never lost a dollar lending money to young lawyers” seeking to start their own practice.

Moreover, Danny was recognized as the man who brought the Fortune 500 to Cherry Hill. He developed, built and financed numerous office buildings along Kings Highway, helping turn sleepy Delaware Township into the regional powerhouse, Cherry Hill, that was nationally recognized for its planned development. The Tenants attracted to Danny’s office buildings were well-known companies who fueled the growth of the Township’s reputation and tax revenues to support a superior educational system, making Cherry Hill the place to live.

Not ignoring public service, Danny served as Chair of the Finance Committee for William Cahill’s successful governor campaign and thereafter served as a Commissioner on the Delaware River Port Authority. During his term as President of the Camden County Bar Association, Danny engaged the first Executive Director of the Association, Jay Strasberg.

Finally, Danny was officially thanked and publicly honored by the State of Israel during a ceremony in Cherry Hill which recognized him for his life-long commitment to humanitarian values and his unfailing generosity. Upon his death in 1984, The Jewish Community Center established the annual Daniel B. Toll Humanitarian Award to be given in recognition of exemplary leadership qualities, generosity and commitment to service.

William Tomar Memorial Award

Bill Tomar graduated from Rutgers Law School in Camden and early in his career founded the firm of Plone & Tomar (later Tomar, O’Brien, Kaplan, Jacoby & Graziano) where he developed his skill and reputation as a nationally recognized trial attorney. He was a National Parliamentarian of the Association of Trial Lawyers of America and a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers. He served on the faculty of the National College of Advocacy and taught at Rutgers Law School. His law school recognized his career accomplishments by awarding Bill the Arthur E. Armitage Distinguished Alumni Award in 1996 and in 2000 naming him one of its “50 Finest” graduates. In addition to his legal work, Bill was active in many civic and charitable organizations. He was a non-governmental delegate to the United Nations, served on the boards of Cooper Hospital, the Camden County Bar Foundation, the Camden County Council of Boy Scouts, the Salvation Army, the Camden County chapter of the American Red Cross and served as President of the Haddonfield Symphony. Bill was honored by both the American Red Cross and the South Jersey Chapter of the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation. In 1993, he was a member of the Operation Smile delegation that brought medical treatment to children with birth defects in Vietnam.

Bruce A. Wallace Memorial Award

Bruce A. Wallace (April 20, 1905 – March 4, 1977) was born in Merchantville, NJ and was a long-time resident of Delaware Township, which later became Cherry Hill Township. Growing up, his family was so poor that his nickname at school was “Parry” (short for “parasite”), as he never had any lunch money and would eat from the other students’ lunches. He was a Camden High School football star, who passed up a college scholarship, choosing instead to attend Rutgers University School of Law in Camden, New Jersey. (That was before a college degree was a requirement for admission to law school.) Upon graduation from law school, Mr. Wallace joined a law firm headed by Albert S. Woodruff, located on Market Street in Camden. After Mr. Woodruff became a chancellor with the New Jersey courts, Mr.

Wallace took over the firm. Mr. Wallace went on to be elected the New Jersey State senator representing Camden County, serving from 1942-1944, and again from 1948-1955. In 1955, Mr. Wallace was elected by his fellow state senators to serve as president of the New Jersey State Senate. Mr. Wallace also served on the board of directors of the Delaware River Port Authority (DRPA) and later as New Jersey counsel to the DRPA.