

A Tribute to Judge Adrian Burke

Charles S. Desmond

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.law.stjohns.edu/lawreview>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at St. John's Law Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in St. John's Law Review by an authorized editor of St. John's Law Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact selbyc@stjohns.edu.

A TRIBUTE TO JUDGE ADRIAN BURKE

CHARLES S. DESMOND*

When Adrian Burke resigned his seat on the Court of Appeals and went back down the river to resume his old post as New York City's Corporation Counsel, he was reversing a route he had taken ten years before. Vigorous and buoyant at 69, he was leaving the semi-cloistered bench to go back to the toil and turmoil of big city government. Unprecedented, yes, but typical of the man. For Judge Burke takes life and its changes as challenges and opportunities. Having written a memorable and satisfying record as a judge, he did not hesitate to begin a new career as head of one of the world's largest law offices, an office whose cares might well daunt a younger but less sanguine man. As was written of another strong and confident American: "Life has no weapons against a man like that."

I assume that others will analyze Judge Burke's many eloquent legal writings, his positive views on social questions, his earnest arguments for effective law and for the basic moralities. I prefer to write of Adrian Burke, the man. In some ways, he is the quintessential New Yorker—urbane, friendly, warm, tolerant, a citizen of today's world. (Actually, he is one of those *rarae aves*—a native of the world's greatest city.) Loving people, he earns their love. Helping people, he strengthens and encourages them. "The proper study of mankind is man" and Judge Burke is a close student of the men and women around him, not a coldly, analytical student but one who searches out their best qualities and develops those qualities.

"Justice," wrote Disraeli, "is truth in action." Because he loves truth and has given and striven to actuate it, I honor Adrian Burke, the eminent and accomplished judge. Because he is a friend beyond compare, I honor Adrian Burke, the man. May the new years, like the old years, be good to him.

* Former Chief Judge, New York State Court of Appeals.