

St. John's Law Review

Volume 29
Number 1 *Volume 29, December 1954, Number*
1

Article 1

May 2013

Honorable Albert Conway

St. John's Law Review

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Recommended Citation

St. John's Law Review (1954) "Honorable Albert Conway," *St. John's Law Review*. Vol. 29 : No. 1 , Article 1.
Available at: <https://scholarship.law.stjohns.edu/lawreview/vol29/iss1/1>

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HONORABLE ALBERT CONWAY

“Four things belong to a judge; to hear courteously, to answer wisely, to consider soberly, and to decide impartially.”

— *Socrates.*

ON NOVEMBER 2ND last, the people of this State elected the Honorable Albert Conway of Brooklyn, New York, Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals of the State of New York. The trust which the people have thus demonstrated is well placed for the record of Judge Conway's life reveals him to be a jurist eminently qualified to assume the grave responsibilities which fall upon the shoulders of the Chief Judge of the State's highest tribunal.

Judge Conway was born in Brooklyn in 1889. He attended St. John's College and Fordham University School of Law where he received his LL.B. degree *cum laude* in 1911. He was admitted to practice law in New York in 1910. He soon won prominence as an assistant district attorney of Kings County where he served from 1913-1920. During the years 1918-1919, he was also a professor of equity jurisprudence at Brooklyn Law School, St. Lawrence University. In 1929 Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed him to his cabinet as Superintendent of Insurance, a post which he held until 1930. In 1930 Governor Roosevelt appointed Judge Conway as County Judge of Kings County. Later in that year Judge Conway was elected a justice of the New York Supreme Court, having been endorsed by both major political parties. In October of 1937 he was assigned to the Appellate Term of that Court, and in 1939 he was designated by Governor Lehman to hold an Extraordinary Term of the Supreme Court for Erie County involving municipal affairs of Buffalo. Thereafter, in 1940, he was appointed an Associate Judge of the Court of Appeals by Governor Lehman, and in the same year he was elected to that office after nomination by both major parties. He has served on that bench continuously ever since. He has been a judge, therefore, for almost a quarter of a century.

Judge Conway has been closely associated with St. John's. In 1932 he received the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, and from 1950 to 1954 served as a member of the Board of Trustees of St. John's University.

The high public esteem in which he is held was to be expected, for the Judge believes that from the little things which we do from day to day we write a judgment upon which other men will act—a judgment from which there is no appeal since we have written it ourselves. In practical application this thought not only regulates every action of the Chief Judge-Elect, but his consideration for struggling would-be attorneys has compelled him to urge it upon them as a worth-while principle. Thus, he exhorts the neophyte to select carefully both his employer and his associates, for, as the Judge says, "The pull of the herd is always downward, never upward, and unless you continuously and purposefully associate with men of noble minds, you will find yourself labelled by reason of the type of professional business which engages your attention and it will be a label that you will find it well-nigh impossible to remove and it may very well prevent the preferment which you may later seek."

But his consideration for others is not limited to the legal profession, as is eminently clear from the numerous charitable activities which occupy much of the Judge's time and attention. Indicative of the breadth of his kindly interest were the words he spoke to the 1951 Summer Meeting of the New York State Bar Association concerning the problem of providing legal assistance to all in need of it. The concluding words of that address read: "Someone has defined charity as love in action. Leibniz wrote that justice was nothing else than love felt by the wise. I like that because I think that we lawyers are votaries in the temple of justice and I like to believe that we are wise. If justice is love felt by the wise, then we who are votaries are able to show our love for our fellow-men by meeting the challenge presented to us and aiding in bringing equal justice to them all no matter how lowly or how great."

This sincere benevolence springs not only from a practical belief in the equality of all men before the law, but from a deeply-rooted belief that the universe is God regulated and

directed. Those who know him well may hear frequent references to this recognition of the Almighty's plan in such terms and thoughts as: "When God closes one door, He always opens another."

The people of New York have chosen well their next Chief Judge. He combines the wisdom and experience of nearly twenty-five years as a judge with the kindliness of a courteous gentleman. Though he requires strict compliance with the rules of law, his attitude is not that of the martinet, but that of one upon whose shoulders rests the heavy responsibility of assuring that justice is properly done. It is no easy task which has been placed upon him, but we have unbounded confidence that he will perform his new duties with the same meticulous care which has characterized his entire legal career. He is, indeed, wisely-chosen as the new repository of the noble heritage and traditions which surround the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals of the State of New York.

