



Dutchess County Courthouse Dedication

Honorable Albert M. Rosenblatt

September 26, 2013

Marcus J. Molinaro
Dutchess County Executive

In the "Sign of Four," Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, writes in the person of Sherlock Holmes that "My mind, rebels at stagnation. Give me problems, give me work, give me the most abstruse cryptogram or the most intricate analysis, and I am in my own proper atmosphere. ... I abhor the dull routine of existence. I crave for mental exaltation. That is why I have chosen my own particular profession, or rather created it, for I am the only one in the world."

Judge Al Rosenblatt's inherent humility and ceaseless modesty might preclude him from accepting that he were much like the great sleuth he so admires. So, we would not be surprised were he to abhor the concept that he, himself, were "the only one in the world."

We, nevertheless, assemble today because history does not write itself and those most worthy of historical reference and memorialization often do not seek it, do not expect it and, like Al Rosenblatt, rebel against it. All the more reason, to make certain that his name and likeness are etched into the halls of this courthouse so that we who inherit the community he made better, and the generations that follow, know of his awesome professional and personal accomplishment, his intellect and integrity, his humanity.

As this community celebrates its 300th year of democracy, we seek to make good on a pledge I offered upon taking office as Dutchess County's 7th Executive. After Judge Rosenblatt administered my oath of office, I suggested that our time together would be defined by how we answer two questions: Who are we as people and how do we hope to live?

Upon his leaving the Court of Appeals, in one of the many published accounts of his retirement, he opined on what it takes to be a good judge, and in so doing offered an answer to those questions. "A judge must have confidence and fairness so the community feels they're getting justice. But you can't look at it [the law] in a completely cold and intellectual way; you have to look at its practical and human consequences."

In this statement, Al Rosenblatt may well have described the way he conducted himself. In it, he may have expressed how he hoped to be remembered. But, in the simplest of ways he summed up the most profound truth of America's fragile existence. The people must have faith that those selected to govern, whether as representatives of the people or the embodiment of our law, do so with confidence and fairness. They must have faith that votes taken, policy exercised and judgments made are not reached absent compassion and decency. As he said in a 1979 letter to the editor regarding Vietnamese "boat people" deemed unwelcome at America's shores, "we see ourselves and hold ourselves out as special, and we should strive to act that way."

Indeed, your honor, indeed.

There is much that could and will be said of Al Rosenblatt's service to this county, state and nation. As he is vibrantly still among us, I think it best we allow him to write and rewrite the next chapters himself. Today, however, this county by Executive Order #6-2013 acknowledges the many contributions and accomplishments of a brilliant and decent man.

Many of you know of his lifelong fascination with Sherlock Holmes. In his account of Judge Rosenblatt's life and service, another of our favorite jurists, George Marlow, quotes Al as saying:

"I think . . . that my fascination is with the period of about 1895 when the world appeared to be in order . . . And the atmosphere was one of fog and rainy nights and cobblestones on Baker Street . . . The period, of course, includes all that goes along with the gas-lit world of Victorian illusion. Holmes represents all that is just, a man who devoted all of his intellectual powers against the forces of wickedness and evil."⁵

In that same publication, Judge Marlow writes of Al's first day in this very building:

"As this writer stood beside him as his first law clerk on that first day in Dutchess County Court, watching everyone in the courthouse rush to please "the new man on the bench," he turned and said, "George, if it ever looks to you like I'm starting to believe I'm entitled to this level of deference, please make me stop."

I am sorry your honor, but you are so entitled and we thank you for not yet stopping in your accomplishment, and service.

"But there can be no grave for Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson...Shall they not always live in Baker Street? Are they not there this moment, as one writes? Outside, the hansoms rattle through the rain, and Moriarty plans his latest devilry. Within, the sea-coal flames upon the hearth and Holmes and Watson take their well-won case...So they still live for all that love them well; in a romantic chamber of the heart, in a nostalgic country of the mind, where it is always 1895." (Vincent Starrett, *the Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*).

Judge, we love you well and you hold a place in the romantic chamber of our hearts; in the nostalgic country of our minds, where confidence and fairness, intellect and integrity remain virtues to strive for and attributes to emulate.

Today we dedicate this monument of American justice to you, and know that for generations to come the Honorable Albert M. Rosenblatt will forever live on Market Street.

Thank you and God bless you.