

MEMORIAL FOR
JUDGE ANTHONY M. CRITELLI
IOWA JUDGES ASSOCIATION-NOVEMBER 17, 2006

Iowa District Court Judge Anthony Murphy Critelli, 76, died Friday, July 28, 2006, at Hospice Kavanagh House. Judge Critelli was born February 19, 1930, in Des Moines to Anthony and Frances Critelli and lived there most of his life. He graduated from Dowling High School in 1948, Notre Dame University in South Bend, Indiana, in 1952, and from the Drake University School of Law in 1955. He married JoAnn Marmion at St. John's Catholic Church in Des Moines on April 2, 1956.

Judge Critelli practiced law in Des Moines for 18 years, and in the early 1970s established the state's first public defender's office. Governor Robert D. Ray appointed him to the district court bench in 1973. Judge Critelli retired in 1993, but served briefly in retirement as a senior judge assigned to the Iowa Court of Appeals.

Judge Critelli and JoAnn moved to Bella Vista, Arkansas, in 1993, sharing time between Arkansas and their longtime summer retreat on the shore of West Okoboji Lake. They returned to Des Moines in 2003.

A longtime parishioner at St. Augustin, Judge Critelli was ordained a deacon in the Catholic Church on April 28, 1974, and helped found the Teens Encounter Christ program for the Diocese of Des Moines and the St. Thomas More Center Catholic Youth Camp at Lake Panorama.

Judge Critelli enjoyed being on stage, appearing in productions for the Des Moines Playhouse, the Drama Workshop, and Okoboji Summer Theater. He belonged to Talent Limited, served as president of the Iowa Judges Association, and was a judge for

the Okoboji Yacht Club and Iowa Mock Trials. He was a member of the Elks and Knights of Columbus. Judge Critelli was devoted to Notre Dame football, the New York Yankees, loved big band music and cruising in his 1967 antique, wooden Chris Craft boat named "The Judge."

Judge Critelli had a limitless love of life and people. He was gregarious and loved being around people. He also loved the law. He had a deep and abiding sense of fairness. If you tried a case in front of Tony, you could be assured that you would be listened to, that you would be treated fairly, with no favoritism shown to anyone, and the law would be followed. His application and enforcement of the law demonstrated not only his loyalty to it, but his belief in it, and reflected the love he had for our country, our state and our system of justice. Chief Justice Earl Warren once said, "It is the spirit and not the form of the law that keeps justice alive." Judge Anthony Critelli embodied that spirit.

Judge Critelli also had an excellent sense of humor, whether telling a joke or a story, listening to one, or being the object of one. His wit was quick and usually right on the mark. During one occasion in court, an employee of a local branch of a national stock brokerage firm was subpoenaed to court along with business records. The employee appeared in court but did not bring the records. Judge Critelli inquired of the person why he had not brought them and was offered a poor excuse. Judge Critelli then responded saying, "When Judge Critelli talks, E.F. Hutton listens." On another occasion at the close of a judges' meeting of the judges of District 5C, led by the chief judge of the district at the time, Judge Gibson Holliday, Judge Holliday asked if there were any other

questions or comments. Judge Critelli raised his hand and was called upon by Judge Holliday. Judge Critelli then said, "Gib, you rule these meetings with an iron head."

Judge Critelli is survived by his wife JoAnn; three sons, Mark A. (wife Cheryl) of West Des Moines; and Michael T. (wife Nicolette) and David Murphy (wife Enriqueta), both of Houston Texas; one daughter, Cheryl Critelli O'Donnell (husband Thomas) of Urbandale; and eight grandchildren. His son Thomas Leo and his parents preceded him in death.

Mr. President, I move that this memorial be spread upon the records of this association and a copy sent to Judge Critelli's wife and children.