



Honorable PIERRE P. GARVEN

PRESENTATION OF THE PORTRAIT
OF THE

Late Chief Justice

Honorable Pierre P. Garven

TO THE

SUPREME COURT OF NEW JERSEY

IN ATTENDANCE:

CHIEF JUSTICE RICHARD J. HUGHES

JUSTICES:

ROBERT L. CLIFFORD

NATHAN L. JACOBS

WORRALL F. MOUNTAIN

MORRIS PASHMAN

MARK A. SULLIVAN

MILTON B. CONFORD, J. A. D. t/a

SPEAKERS:

GEORGE B. GELMAN, J. S. C.

OCTAVIUS ORBE, ESQ.

New Jersey Supreme Court

State House Annex

Trenton, New Jersey

January 7, 1975

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CHIEF JUSTICE HUGHES: Ladies and gentlemen, the Court has organized for the purpose of receiving a portrait of a man deeply missed by all of us, the late Chief Justice Pierre Garven, and before calling on Mr. Orbe for remarks on behalf of the State Bar Association I would like to recognize the presence here of both Mrs. Garvens, that is to say the mother and Mrs. Pierre Garven, the widow of Pete — I like to call him “Pete” Garven and I hope that will be understood as being affectionate and not in any sense undignified; and also former Governor Cahill and Mr. Donald Lan representing Governor Byrne; State Bar Association president Stanley Brotman; the painter of this portrait, Mr. Burns; and others who were very close I think to Chief Justice Pete Garven. So without further ado and to get back to some of the other guests later, I’d like to ask Mr. Octavius Orbe on behalf of the Bar Association to address the Court.

MR. ORBE: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice, Associate Justices.

May it please the Court, in sadness we gathered here almost one year ago to memorialize in the records of this Court the untimely passing of our young Chief Justice, Pierre Garven. Today we gather once again in honor of his memory, this time not in sorrow but with a pleasure and pride derived from the presentation of this splendid portrait of him to the Court.

The New Jersey State Bar Association felt privileged to commission this fine work of Paul Burns. In fact this is the third portrait of a New Jersey Chief Justice which our association has presented in recent years. Beginning in 1959 with the presentation of a portrait of deceased Chief Justice Arthur T. Vanderbilt, followed by the presentation in 1974 of the portrait of retired Chief Justice Joseph Weintraub, also the work of Paul Burns. We thank the Court for the opportunity of this presentation and we thank the gifted artist for his fine work. This portrait shall remain here a

constant tribute to Pierre Garven's lifetime of service, where it shall be in the presence of portraits of other men of greatness in the law.

With the Court's permission now I would like to present to the Court the Honorable George B. Gelman, a long-time close friend and law partner of Chief Justice Garven and now a Judge of our Superior Court to speak in honor of the deceased Chief Justice.

CHIEF JUSTICE HUGHES: Thank you very much, Mr. Orbe.

JUDGE GELMAN: Mr. Chief Justice, Associate Justices, may it please the Court: I am privileged to present to the Court on behalf of the Trustees of the New Jersey State Bar Association this portrait of the late Chief Justice Pierre Garven. Pete Garven and I were partners for almost eight years and friends for two decades. I am, therefore, in no position to offer you an objective appraisal of the reasons why his portrait should grace this seat of justice in our State. At prior proceedings before this Court others have eloquently described the career, the accomplishments and the qualities of the man who was Chief Justice of this Court for a brief moment in its history. There is little that I can add on this occasion to what has already been said except to provide a brief and, with your indulgence, a personal footnote.

It is with a strong sense of irony that I recall the day Pete argued his first case before this Court. Successfully, I should add. The decision is reported at 26 *N. J.* 330, 139 A. 2d 738. I accompanied him on that day to provide moral support. We arrived before Court convened and browsed in this lovely room and inspected the portraits which adorned its walls. Pete's comment, as I remember it, was that the room could be brightened up a bit if they would get some decent pictures.

Those of us who were privileged to have shared a friendship with Pete can well appreciate the irony of this occasion in another sense, for Pete made no secret of his disdain for public ceremony and especially if it focused upon him. This attitude reflected a deep seated element of his char-

acter which guided him throughout his professional and public life. What always mattered was getting the job done and as effectively as possible. The honors and accolades, the recognition that goes with accomplishment, were always irrelevant for him, and so it has been truly said that he was a modest and humble man. Outwardly he was, but the standards of performance he imposed upon himself were never modest or humble. He always demanded of himself a degree of excellence beyond the vision of most men.

It was also characteristic of Pete to take the greatest burdens upon himself, whether in his dealings with clients beset with problems or in the crises that recur within a law office. He had the knack by his calm and purpose of manner of lightening the load which others felt they were carrying. He was a model counselor in the truest sense in which that term is attributed to our profession. He never took over the situation or overwhelmed one with advice, but helped to focus and direct one's own thinking into a more productive course. I remember so often walking into his office with an insoluble problem and walking out with a solution I had known all along. That also was one of his unique talents: He brought out the best which you had within yourself, and our memories of him are inevitably shaped by the good feelings which he inspired.

These qualities which were so remarkable in Pete are not necessarily peculiar to lawyers and judges, but they served him well in his professional career. He had intellectual command of the abstract equations which permeate the language of the law. His consummate skill as an advocate, however, lay in his ability to perceive the human elements in the equation and to utilize them to separate fact from fiction. In the courtroom he never lacked a strategy nor revealed that he had one. His candor and charm disarmed his adversaries who frequently found that they had been overwhelmed into unforeseen defeats. Among his generation he was indeed without peer as a trial lawyer.

If we are fortunate generations to come will visit this room as Pete and I did almost two decades ago, and they may wonder why the portrait of this man should be here.

They will find no reported decisions written by him to establish his place in New Jersey jurisprudence. Only the archivists will be aware, if at all, of the magnificent statement he bequeathed to us at Cherry Hill in the Fall of 1973. Few will remember the roster of judges — more than half of those sitting today in our courts — in whose appointment Pete played so instrumental a role and who are also part of the legacy he has left us. This room is and ought to be hallowed ground for the lawyers of this State and future generations should be aware of Pete's conception of the law. He shared with Holmes the view that law is not an abstraction to be plotted upon graph paper or to be read out of a computer. Law to him reflected man: his imperfections, his weaknesses, his blemishes, but also his striving to attain that elusive ideal of justice, men dealing fairly and honestly with one another. Pete knew and he practiced this ideal as a friend, as a lawyer, as a judge and as a public servant. It is an ideal which we all may share but all too few can practice.

Pete Garven's portrait deserves a place in this Hall of Justice because he was a just man. His work, as Justice Holmes said, "is woven forever into the great vibrating web of the world. The eye that can read the import of it's motion can divine the story of all our deeds, of all thoughts." To that eye I am content to leave the memory and recognition of this great head and heart.

Thank you.

CHIEF JUSTICE HUGHES: Thank you very much, Judge Gelman.

The Court receives with much gratitude the portrait of our former brother and Chief Justice and I'm very much moved by the fact that it has been presented and also by the fact that many of the former associates in the cabinet — former Attorney General Kugler and many others, I won't take the time to mention all of them, but it has been good of them all to come here and to share in this occasion which, as Mr. Orbe says, is part sorrowful and part joyful because of the tradition that this man has left to us.

Actually in the brief year that I have been on the Court after having been appointed by Governor Cahill, I have regarded this as one of the most satisfying and happy years of my life, partly because of my friendship with Pete Garven and the fact that I have not passed a day on this bench without thinking of him and indeed the other predecessors who have acted as Chief Justice, especially under the new Court system. As a matter of fact I wear a robe which had been intended to be worn by Pete Garven and which was given to me by his lovely wife, and I have regarded it each time I put it on as an honor and I've thought a little bit about this fine man. Although there are no reported decisions on file in his name he, nevertheless, brought great credit to the bench and to the Bar previously and to the Governors who appointed him either as a member of the bench, as I did once, or to be his counsel and confidante, as did Governor Cahill.

I think an occasion like this is one that ought not to elicit a great deal of statistical or background or school or college information — rather we should remember the graceful integrity and the principal and seriousness which this man brought to our community in New Jersey. We have with us here today others who have occupied this bench: Former Justice Vincent Haneman — I'm not sure whether any others of the former members of the Court are here or not.

In any case we respond not in great detail but, nevertheless, most sincerely and have tried to model our work in this year since we've lost Pete Garven with the same industry and principle and integrity which he would have brought to the Court.

Customarily, except for the fact that we have had two rather hectic days of hearing arguments and our conference room is in extreme disarray, we would invite those of Pete's friends who are here to have a sort of reception and meet Mrs. Garven and the senior Mrs. Garven. Instead of doing that I would suggest that the Court will withdraw and we will consider this a reception room and then all or some of us will be glad to rejoin you and informally inspect this

fine portrait and have an opportunity for us to renew acquaintanceships and old friendships.

The Court, therefore, if there is no further business before it, having accepted with great thanks this portrait which will hang here, will recess for the time being.