

## APPENDIX

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HONORABLE ALBERT W. CRETELLA, JR.<sup>1</sup>  
1925–2009

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“He was larger than life to so many people. He always found something good in a person to like and went out of his way to do whatever he could to help anyone with a problem.” Albert W. Cretella III.

Judge Albert W. Cretella, Jr., died on March 7, 2009. Born on May 18, 1925, he was a lifetime resident of North Haven, Connecticut. He graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1947 and the University of Connecticut Law School in 1950. He was admitted to the Connecticut Bar in 1950 and practiced law at Cretella, Carboni & Cretella. He was elected to the Connecticut State General Assembly in 1971 and became Assistant House Majority Leader in 1973 and Counsel to the House Minority Leader in 1975. He also served as Town Counsel for the town of North Haven for twenty-seven years and was a volunteer fireman for the Montowese District. Judge Cretella served as Judge for the Court of Common Pleas, 1977; Judge for the Superior Court, 1978; Chief Administrative Judge, Civil Division, 1985; Chief Administrative Judge, Facilities, 1986; Judge of the Appellate Court, 1990. He was President of the Connecticut Judges’ Association from 1984–1986. He also served on the American Bar Association Executive Committee National Conference State Trial Judges in 1987. At the time of his death, he was a State Trial Judge Referee. Judge Cretella was Vice President of the Quinnipiac Club, and a member of the New Haven Country Club as well as the Knights of Columbus. He is preceded in death by his wife of thirty-eight years, Joan Turner Cretella. He is survived by his wife of eighteen years, the Honorable Antoinette Dupont, former Chief Judge of the Connecticut State Appellate Court.

Judge Cretella was a faithful friend to all. He was a longtime member and a devoted parishioner of St. Therese Church in North Haven. The Reverend Timothy Meehan, an old friend, who officiated at Albert’s Mass, recalled that whether it was fixing a kneeler in church or kneeling with the gardener, there was no job too big or too small for him and no person too big or too small with whom to schmooze. “We had some wonderful times,” Meehan said after Mass. “Not only did Cretella fix things inside the church, he often offered to take care of church grounds.” They also played golf from time to

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<sup>1</sup> Prepared by Honorable Paul M. Foti, Connecticut Appellate Court.

time, with Meehan doing better at golf, but Cretella getting in “not the last word, but the best word.”

Meehan said he once asked Cretella what gave him his sense of faith, and Cretella responded, “If you trust people, especially God, it gives you the opportunity to step forward at the appropriate time and show your faith in all you say and do.”

Albert was a doer his whole life. Perhaps this came about from his time at West Point—but perhaps it was just part of his nature to make sure that he was productive and contributing to the good of the world. He always had his list of things to take care of and he was not shy about making lists for others. He was a very organized person. To him the adage everything has a place was a mantra. His tools, the newspapers, his dishes and glasses, were always placed in an orderly fashion. In fact, even the refrigerator was organized.

Anyone who had the good fortune to know Judge Cretella found him to be a very warmhearted, compassionate and respectful man. He was very conservative in his beliefs but would easily tolerate his many liberal-thinking friends.

His children have fond memories and have commented: “Dad was firm, but fair. The punishment always fit the crime and when you accepted responsibility for your actions and the punishment, you usually got off early for good behavior. Even though we stand here looking responsible and innocent, let me just say that Dad had more experience than he would have liked in doling out punishment to us. But this is where he showed compassion. When as youngsters, we were ready to run away from home because we thought he was too strict, he would bring us a suitcase and help us pack it, knowing that we would never go; when we didn’t eat everything on our plate for dinner, he would remind us that there were starving people in some foreign country; when we needed some money to get us through a tough time, he gave us a break on the interest rate he would charge us. We have numerous stories, but the bottom line is that he was always there for us no matter what the situation.

“Dad was a fixer. No matter what it was that was broken—he could fix it. He was the worst nightmare for a manufacturer and he loved those warranties. Being as logical as he was, he would take apart anything—dishwashers, washing machines, toasters, stoves, anything—figure out what the problem was and call the manufacturer for parts. It wasn’t atypical that

he would get a response that they hadn't made that model in twenty years, but they would check to see if they could find the part he was looking for. Not surprising he would find the part somewhere and fix it. He was tenacious."

To know Albert was to love him. He was frugal, yet very generous in his own way. He would drive a few extra miles to save a penny on a gallon of gas. If he had someone helping him out in the yard that he was paying by the hour, he would calculate the pay down to the minute, but he would always make him a nice lunch—making sure he did not count the time it took him to eat—and give him a nice tip.

He befriended everyone and he was well-known for speaking his mind clearly and often loudly. Subtlety was not his strong suit. He made his point directly and never minced words. He was a stickler for process—especially in the courtroom. He would not tolerate ineptitude. He was very meticulous, very intelligent and possessed a vast breadth of experience.

Albert was a very warm and loving man. He was also a very funny person. He loved to banter with his family, friends and colleagues. He especially loved to rib his golf buddies and was always ready to remove a few dollars from them in a game of gin, at which he was quite proficient. He was never at a loss for a joke or two, which he delivered perfectly and normally resulted in gut wrenching laughter.

Judge Cretella's children, Claudia, Albert, Peter, Lisa and Anthony remember: "Dad loved to travel. He went on many trips with our mom and our stepmom. He was very fond of the trips with his golf buddies, and the stories of their escapades were always quite amusing. When we were kids, he loved the trips where he would pile all seven of us into the car and drive to New Hampshire for vacation. We're surprised that we never crashed, as numerous times he would have to reach back and whack one of us in the back seat for fighting.

"Dad had an extensive circle of very close friends. His friends spanned many areas including good friends who are judges; golfers; bowlers; classmates from high school to West Point to law school; clergy; gardeners; fishermen and the list can go on. Dad was loyal to all he loved.

"Dad was a mentor. He raised us to believe in ourselves and to support each other: To have faith, to be strong and have conviction in what we believed in, to be caring and to

love life. Dad thrived on family and friends. We lived in such a tight family community—with cousins, uncles, aunts all within a stones throw of our house. Dad was the center of the Nutile and Cretella families. Dad always took the time to make sure everybody was okay. When someone was sick or hurt, he was there to help in whatever way he could. When someone needed legal assistance, he figured out what he could do. When someone couldn't get their tomatoes or eggplants to grow, he told them to come pick some of his. He was all about family as it was the most important thing in his life.”

He loved God, his family, his country and the law. We are all blessed to have known this wonderful man, Judge Albert W. Cretella, Jr. We join in his children's final eulogy: “So Daddy, be at peace in heaven, where your garden will not have any weeds, your drives will be long and straight and your Manhattan will be perfect.”

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