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Justice Jesse W. Carter: A Portrait of Greatness

Alumni Forum Editor,

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Alumni news

Alumni luncheons successful

Golden Gate Law School alumni from various sections of Northern California renewed friendships and learned about Golden Gate Law School, 1977, at the recent alumni luncheons. Luncheons were held in Oakland, San Francisco, Palo Alto, Sacramento and Marin County and brought together approximately 170 people in all. Speakers at the luncheons included former Deans John A. Gorfinkel, Paul S. Jordan, and Dean Judith G. McKelvey.

Alumni notes

- Richard D. Bridgman, '58, was elected to the Board of Governors of the California Trial Lawyers Association for the 1977 term. Mr. Bridgman practices in Oakland and is a partner in O'Neill, Bridgman & Schock.
- David Orozco, '66, recently was elected Chairperson of the Bay Area Equal Employment Opportunity Officers Council.
- Joseph E. Russell, '69, has gone into private practice in San Francisco. He formerly was with Morrison & Foerster in San Francisco.
- Conrad D. Breece, '72, became a partner at Cotton Seligman & Ray in San Francisco as of January, 1977.
- David Ainsworth, '72, is now Senior Counsel in the Law Department of Matson Navigation Company, San Francisco.
- Diana Richmond, '73, has been elected to serve as secretary of the Golden Gate University Alumni Association Council. Ms. Richmond practices with Stern, Stotter & O'Brien in San Francisco.
- Neil Franklin, '74, is Managing Attorney of the Lewiston office of Idaho Legal Aid Services, Inc.
- Nancy Sevitch, '74, has joined the Stephen Adams law practice in San Francisco.
- Joseph J. Kubancik, '74, recently joined the firm of O'Connor, Cohn, Dillon & Barr in San Francisco. Mr. Kubancik previously practiced with VISTA in Austin, Texas, where he also earned an L.L.M. at the University of Texas School of Law.
- Katherine Hill, '75, is a partner in the newly-formed firm of Brown & Hill in San Francisco.
- Mark L. Webb, '75, recently became an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of California.
- Delia M. Chilgren, '75, won the San Francisco Barristers Club's first annual literary contest with a selection of contemporary poems. Ms. Chilgren is a legal editor with Matthew Bender, specializing in California property law.
- Jonathon Ellison, '75, is a staff attorney in the Lewiston office of Idaho Legal Aid Services, Inc.
- Elaine Andrews, '76, has joined the Alaska Judicial Council as Staff Attorney in Anchorage.
- Darlene Marie Azevedo, '76, has joined the Oakland firm of Wald & Greedman.
- Joe Gruber recently was appointed Traffic Referee for the Northern Judicial District of San Mateo County.
- Richard C. Vanden Brul has been elected trust investment officer of Security Trust Company, Rochester, N.Y. Mr. Vanden Brul is also an adjunct professor at Rochester Institute of Technology.

Justice Jesse W. Carter: A portrait of greatness



Who are those serious scholars whose portraits exhort students to study from their imposing positions on the walls of the Golden Gate Law Library? One of them is Jesse W. Carter, Justice of the Supreme Court of California from 1939-1959 and a 1913 graduate of Golden Gate College of the Law.

Research by Nancy Carol Carter, Director of Law Library Services, reveals that the late Justice Carter was something of a renaissance man. A native Californian, Justice Carter was also a miner, a railroad shop worker, a city and district attorney, counsel for the State Dental Board, a member of the first State Bar Board of Governors, a Rotarian, a Boy Scout leader, an expert on water law, a student of poetry and literature and a state senator.

Shortly after graduating from Golden Gate, Justice Carter moved to Redding where he practiced law and held political office from 1914 until his election to the Supreme Court in 1939. As an attorney he was known for his keen mind and advocacy skills. In his twenty years on the bench he developed a reputation for extensive understanding of the common law and for its use in the protection of individual rights. He was the only justice to consistently dissent in the court's decisions sustaining the "witch hunting" laws during the McCarthy era.

Justice Carter is particularly associated with the development of tort law in California. It was during his tenure that the California court assumed national leadership in that area of the law. In 1948 Chief Justice Gibson spoke of Carter's opinions as "reminiscent of the tall timbers of his early life, standing far above the forest and stretching heavenward to receive the full force of the elements, but rugged and determined to search for and discover new and undeveloped horizons . . . one of the truly great men in California's judicial history." As pointed out by one writer, considering this was not an obituary statement it constituted a wonderful tribute from a colleague.

The vigorous and varied career of Justice Carter ended in 1959 when he died at age 70. He had remained on the bench, active and alert, until one month before his death. The late Judge Oliver Carter, U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of California, was the son of Justice Jesse W. Carter.

Note: For more information on Justice Carter see 10 Hastings L.J. 353 (1959) and *Supreme Court Justices of California*, J. Edward Johnson (1966), pp. 161-169.

Interested in meeting with students to discuss the practice of law? This fall, Golden Gate is instituting a program to enable law grads to meet with students. Alums interested in participating should contact Placement Director Wally Allen by mail or call him at 391-7800, x 285.