

## Judge Lawrence Gubow

### Fighter for justice loses last battle

Sometimes the need to get in front of a typewriter is a very compelling thing. And so it is now at 5:30 a.m. on March 28. It's just another Tuesday, probably too-cold-for-spring, yet maybe spring will be in the air today, but not for me, because I have lost one of my heroes. And today, Larry Gubow will be eulogized and will be buried.

Larry was not a trivial man. He was one of the deepest, most sensitive and brightest individuals I ever met, and carry as it may sound, I prized this friendship and the few times I ever got to spend with him in close conversation.

When we met, more than 20 years ago, he was a member of the Michigan Securities and Exchange Commission and already on the way to a reputation of exposing the unfair housing practices which we came to know as the Grosse Pointe Point system. We were colleagues, working actively for the Jewish War Veterans in Michigan, and for Larry, nationally too. Of all the rhetoric that symbolized JVV, for Larry the operational work was "To uphold the fair name of the Jew."

Larry was one of those veterans who came back from World War II having survived service in the infantry where he was severely wounded and having been a prisoner of war. Working for veterans and their families and survivors was vital for him.

PEOPLE RECOGNIZED that Lawrence Gubow wasn't a trivial man. And often they imposed on him. In truth, they unloaded on him a lot, his wife Estelle once told me. They asked for favors and advice almost to the point of using him. But Larry was always gracious and always willing to help people. People were the top of the list and the bottom line to Larry Gubow.

When he became United States District Attorney for Eastern Michigan in 1961, the entire Jewish community was proud of Larry. Sometimes, just a few

### French society adds members

The North Farmington High chapter of the French Honor Society will induct 19 new members this spring.

They are: juniors Amy Paul, Chris Szweczyk, Liz Stasinos and Doris Aljouny; and sophomores Jamie Almeddine, Ron Mitchell, Sue Gresham and Shelly Ross.

Senior members to be inducted are: Ruthanne Walker, Mary Reed, Nancy



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times, we would sit and talk at some convention or JVV meeting, usually early in the morning in a far-away city. We always talked about justice, civil liberties, the First Amendment, things that an aspiring journalist and a prominent attorney had in common. And long before Watergate, while he served as USDA, the Nixon administration, he told me there were very bad people in this government and a lot of reason to be wary.

Larry had doubts about his appointment to the federal bench in 1968. Because when he became Federal District Judge Lawrence Gubow, he realized he could no longer be in a position to quash unfair indictments of young people and others who needed a second chance more than a jail term. He never aspired to the Appeals Court because that would take him in a direction away from the level of people.

He was a family man and always proud of Estelle, his much beloved wife, and his three children, Mona, David and Janey. He was also proud of his mother and father and very aware that his father, Jacob, was an immigrant from a land where a person of the Jewish faith could never aspire to rise as Larry himself had done.

WHEN JACK and I visited Mexico on a first trip, Larry and Estelle gave us Mona's address. She was a bride, just having married her Carlos and

they came through with flying colors, taking precious hours to spend with us and make our visit special. Larry was proud of that as he was proud of everything his three children did. He glowed when he described David's great success in vote-getting as a first time candidate for office as an unknown. For Larry, the fact that David wasn't elected county treasurer wasn't as important as how well the young attorney played the game and mainly, how well thought of he was.

I first got to know Larry well about 17 years ago. He was the chairman of the 1961 national convention for JVV held in Detroit, and I headed a committee for public relations. He was a very talented organizer and for a year, his committees operated well. He was able to instill such enthusiasm that many people performed far and above any capability they ever realized they had, including me.

One afternoon I sat across from Larry at a luncheon meeting and before eating, he took out a pillbox, and proceeded to take a number of pills. I was shocked and inquired about it, learning for the first time about his diabetes. At the end of the year of convention planning, when sessions began in reality, Larry was hospitalized, and we were told he was having a flare-up from shrapnel in his legs. It put a damper on the convention, and I shall never forget, when, at the end of the week at the banquet Larry came to the party in a wheelchair and received an ovation such as I have rarely heard.

HE WASN'T really a man for ovations, though. He was a quiet person. When he spoke at a meeting, it was always after considerable thought. Larry had the judicial temperament long before he got the robes.

When he did become Judge Gubow, he was known as an eminently fair judge, one who would guard any citizen's rights until proven guilty and one who didn't shrink the tough cases. He never became national commander of JVV, not because he wasn't wanted or highly respected but because of the protocol of his position.

We weren't best buddies, by any means. Knowing him all those years, I

learned only month ago, that we shared a Jan. 10 birthday. But Larry was one of my heroes and one time I had the chance to defend him.

He was judge then but also President of the Jewish Community Council, two positions not always easy to balance. Israel and France were clashing and making headlines, and the Jewish community picketed the French Consul. As head of that Jewish community, Larry felt he had to man that picket line and he did. And he got wasted editorially by one of the downtown dailies, chided for making a public stand even as he sat on the federal bench.

Everyone was told not to react, not to call or write, just cool it. But I wasn't cool at all, and for once, I couldn't turn the other cheek, just a dead ear. And I wrote a letter to that newspaper. I was angry and I told them rather than chide the judge for acting, he should be praised and I recall saying that Brandeis and others are not remembered for inaction.

MY LETTER was published prominently, and though lots of people talked about it and my mother still carries it in her wallet, Larry never said much. I'd like to think that after that incident, a link between Larry and I was forged, one that would never be broken.

When he was honored in recent years, I got to write about him again, this time as a working journalist, but I was no less honored. And I remember after all the high praise, he said to me: "Shirlee, I've only done what I thought anybody should do."

In recent years, we've known that Larry's life was endangered, by right wingers after he presided at the trial of a prominent Ku Klux Klansman and by the diabetes that took his sight, took his strength and impaired many bodily functions. But Larry was a fighter and it is no surprise that he remained on the bench until just a week before his death.

It's tough to lose a hero, and we'll all be less because of it. But in another way, I'll always be more for having known him.

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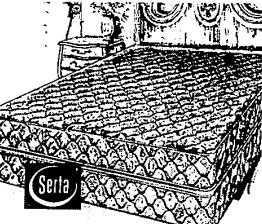
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