

EULOGY

EULOGY

By FREDERICK PAUL

I want to tell you about my brother Bill.

Some things are very easy to say. He was a decent man. He sang in church choirs all his life. He devoted himself to his family and was active in youth programs.

While I say these are things easy to say, there are many as we all know, about whom one could not say such things. So, in a sense, these commonplace virtues, while easy to say of Bill, really are extraordinary — decency, devotion, love.

Bill was a complicated man, inarticulate and inhibited in personal communication, but articulate and forceful in his conduct. In judging another, as Christ would, one looks at conduct. Conduct is the ultimate criterion of life.

In his professional life, especially in the Prosecutor's Office, he collected millions of dollars in taxes for King County — not by enacting new laws (modern society figures that the way to solve problems is to enact new laws) but by simply enforcing existing laws. For example, only after Bill Paul focused on national banks and the fact that their stockholders paid no taxes on their stock holdings, did that major property begin to pay taxes.

Taxes support our schools, our fire departments, the services that make our lives livable.

For example, only after Bill Paul focused on the value of leaseholds from the State of Washington, did such leaseholds begin to pay taxes. This concept required lessees from the University of Washington in downtown Seattle for the first time in a century, to pay taxes. And there are other facts where his competence as a prosecutor had its major impact.

But the major contribution of his brain throughout his life was his articulating in a formal legal theory of the rights of the Alaskan Indians in their current ownership of their ancestral lands.

The story begins back in 1938, when Bill was in law school. He wrote his thesis on the land rights of the Tlingit and Haida Indians. And that was the beginning.

Speaking of his brain, that work was creative. It was prior to the 1941 U.S. Supreme Court decision of the Walapai case, before the Margold opinion of 1942 (these were the foundation for later establishment of Indian legal rights).

His thesis had the dignity, logic and creativity to be quoted by Felix Cohen, the foremost scholar of American and Alaskan Indian property rights, in Cohen's essay on the Alaskan problem.

For 16 years he devoted himself to the Tlingits and Haidas and their problems — land rights, fish trap fights, Indian reorganization act.

You know his career at the Prosecutor's Office and so move to his latest effort.

He had a concept for the organization of the Alaskan Natives living in the "lower 48" to implement the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act for these non-residents of Alaska.

And if these folks ever get their desires to rule their own destiny, it will be his ideas which will have guided them.

Christ will judge him generously. We, his friends and relatives can be content — secure in the Peace of his soul.