

Cumberland County Bar Area. Memorial Service held in Superior Court
January 16, 1968. Judge Pomeroy presiding. ~~Mr.~~ ^{Mr.} ~~Barnet~~ ^{Bar} ~~Shel~~ ^{Shel} gave the eulogy

MAY IT PLEASE THIS HONORABLE COURT:

Israel Bernstein, gentleman, community leader, scholar and lawyer, the son of Abraham J. and Sarah Bernstein, was born in Portland on November 22, 1890. A graduate of Portland High School, he attended Harvard College and Harvard Law School, and chose to live in the city of his birth all of his lifetime, interrupted only by his absence during World War I, when he served his country as a regimental sergeant-major with the U. S. 12th Division.

The dignity of a cultured gentleman marked his bearing and was expressed in every facet of his life. An avid reader, a keen intellect, and a concern for humanity, combined with a sense of the need of active participation, early led to his recognition as a leader in a multitude and variety of causes, so numerous as to defy full listing and mention.

Israel Bernstein was not content to maintain the status quo or to rely upon hidebound tradition, but rather chose constantly to look forward to originating those changes which would inevitably lead to progress and advancement. His constant search for new and progressive ideas left his indelible mark as a founder and President of the Portland Y.M.H.A., the Jewish Federation of Portland, the Maine Jewish Council, the Jewish Historical Society, the Jewish Community Center and upon so very many other organizations of his religious faith.

But the talents and energy of Israel Bernstein were devoted equally as much to other sectarian and civic endeavors which in their breadth and scope encompassed almost every range of

community life. In the critical days of 1933 when the closing of all Portland banks was ordered by the President of the United States, and the financial collapse of our local economy seemed to be inevitable, Israel Bernstein displayed courage, conviction, and firm faith in the future of Portland, when he and a handful of equally determined individuals organized and established the Casco Bank & Trust Co. which today, together with so many other organizations, remains as a lasting tribute to his energy and talents.

As a Director of the Home Federal Savings and Loan Association and as Vice President of the Greater Portland Chamber of Commerce and of the Portland Better Business Bureau as well as directorship on many of the corporations for whom he acted as counsel, Israel Bernstein occupied an important role in the financial welfare of his city. The high ethical standards which he employed not only in his chosen profession but in service to the business community was exemplified by his interest in the Better Business Bureau which was designed to protect both business and the public from unfair practices.

His wisdom and judgment as a leader were sought by and freely given to numerous community efforts. To the Boy Scouts of America, he served as President and Director of the Pine Tree Council and as Vice Chairman of the Executive Committee of the New England Region of the Boy Scouts of America. He cherished the Boy Scout Beaver and Antelope awards presented to him for outstanding work on behalf of that important organization.

The scope of his community interests included his serving as a Director of the Portland Y. M. C. A., the Portland Community Chest, the Goodwill Industries, the Torch Club, Commissioner for Relief of Needy Veterans of World War I and as the Government Appeal Agent for Selective Service.

His manifold activities and the respect in which he was held by his contemporaries inevitably led to his involvement in municipal government where he served as a member of the Board of Overseers of the Poor, as a member of the Portland School Committee and as a Trustee of the Portland Public Library and of the Maine Library Association.

It was typical of Israel Bernstein's service on the many Boards that his participation was never that of passive acquiescence but was characterized by his inquisitive searching and incisive questions which oftentimes led to new and advanced opportunities for service.

The law was his chosen profession and he served it faithfully and well. A member of the American, Maine and Cumberland Bar Associations, he was honored by his fellow practitioners when he was elected and served as President of the Cumberland Bar Association. Two of his greatest interests in recent years were the development of the University of Maine School of Law and his service on the Advisory Committee on Civil Rules by appointment of the Chief Justice. As Chairman of the Liaison Committee of the Cumberland Bar to the Law School, he took great pride in the growth and final accreditation of the Law School, and as a member of the Rules Committee, he was publicly commended by the late Mr. Justice Sullivan for the extensive work which he performed

as a member of that committee. He considered the practice of law to be a sacred trust where honesty, integrity and legal knowledge were combined for the purpose of serving justice. He brooked no deviation from the ethical principles and concepts which guided him in the successful practice of law from 1915 until the time of his death on June 26, 1967. In so doing, he gained and deserved the respect of his fellow lawyers, his clients and the courts of our state.

At an age when most active practitioners of law perhaps would have felt that they should enjoy the relaxed benefits accruing from their many years of successful practice, Israel Bernstein, in the progressive manner which typified his entire life, chose to enter into a new legal phase when he participated in the founding of and became the senior partner of the present law firm of Bernstein, Shur, Sawyer and Nelson, which bears his name. Those of us who were fortunate to be associated with him in this new endeavor, can only recall with great love and affection the friendship, the guidance, the enthusiasm, and the consuming interest with which Israel Bernstein devoted himself to this new venture.

Above all, Israel Bernstein was a family man, and lived a life completely devoted to his wife and children. His tender love for his wife, Rebecca, his children, Sumner and Helen, and his brother, Louis, and their life as a closely knit family was self-evident to all who knew Israel and his family. His justifiable pride in the personal achievements and recognition of his wife, Rebecca, who in her own right is a member of our Bar, as well as the scholastic attainments of his daughter, Helen, and

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the legal stature gained by his son, Sumner, and his brother, Louis, gave to Israel the inner satisfaction of a family knit together in love and affection.

His death on June 26, 1967, leaves a void in the hearts of those who loved, respected and admired him, but the memory of his full life will ever be a tribute to the high standards which he set for himself, his family and his profession.