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Retired judge from White Lake passes on St. Patrick's Day

APRIL 3, 2008

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The Honorable Terrance K. Boyle, a retired judge with the Wayne County Circuit Court, died on St. Patrick's Day after a two-year struggle with cancer, in the care of his loving family at his home in White Lake Township. He was 69 years old. Born at the family home on Elm Street in Grand Rapids on Jan. 23, 1939, Terrance was the youngest of John and Laura (nee Kelling) Boyle's seven children.

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He took his undergraduate degree at Aquinas College and his J.D. at the University of Michigan Law School graduating in 1966 before being appointed Wayne County Assistant Prosecuting Attorney in 1968.

Judge Terrance K. Boyle was appointed to Detroit Recorder's Court in January 1985 by Gov. James Blanchard and was elected to that position in 1986. At the time of his appointment, he was Chief of the Criminal Division of the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office. While serving as a judge on Recorder's court, one of the busiest criminal courts in the country, Judge Boyle had presided over 600 major criminal trials. In 1992, his judicial qualifications were rated "outstanding" by the Detroit Bar Association.

From 1968 to 1972, Judge Boyle served as trial attorney, appellate attorney and executive assistant to the prosecutor. In 1970 he married Patricia Boyle and they began their lifelong journey together. He and his wife shared a commitment to merit and diversity and he was passionately involved in political activities. He supported the advancement of women and minorities through participation in many groups including the NAACP, of which he was a lifetime member. In 1974, Judge Boyle was appointed Deputy Chief of the Criminal Division, Chief of Trials and Appeals. In 1981, he was appointed Chief of the Criminal Division where he served until he was appointed to the bench. His work provided him with litigation, appellate, supervisory and administrative experience. Between 1968 and 1974, he had personally tried more than 100 major felony trials.

During his 24 years of public service, Judge Boyle has been responsible for projects resulting in significant improvements to the criminal justice system. In 1969, he drafted a reform statute covering Michigan's Citizens Grand Jury. In 1970, he designed the Wayne County Organized Crime Task Force and secured federal funds to implement the project. He also organized and was responsible for adoption of merit appointments to the prosecutor's office and regularly taught at state-wide seminars.

In 1974 and 1975, he committed himself as one of the principal draftspersons of Michigan's Criminal Sexual Conduct Code which has been called the most comprehensive and successful reform of rape law in the nation. Judge Boyle worked with the Legislature in passing this law and traveled to other states to

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assist in the passage of reform legislation. The code has been adopted, in whole or in part, in 40 other states. Judge Boyle was awarded the Champion of Justice Award in 1998 for his contributions and was appointed in 1981 by the Supreme Court to serve on the committee to create rules of criminal procedure in Michigan.

Judge Boyle had the heart of a teacher and counseled lawyers for both prosecution and defense in arguments before the U.S. Supreme Court. In addition, as an adjunct professor of law at the University of Detroit Law School (1975-1976) he taught Constitutional Criminal Procedure. He was also a visiting lecturer at the U of M Law School and Wayne State University Law School and taught at many professional legal organizations. As a founding member of Legal Aid and Defenders; Judge Boyle demonstrated his lifetime passion for truth and fairness. Although most of his career has been spent on the bench or as a prosecuting attorney, Judge Boyle also served as an attorney for the National Labor Relations Board, and in 1972 he took a leave of absence from the prosecutor's office to serve Wayne County Sheriff William Lucas as director of the court Service Division for two years where he was involved in labor negotiations, mediation and arbitration.

Judge Boyle had a razor sharp intelligence, was an excellent teacher and loved a good argument — "Wait just let me finish," was his familiar refrain when deep in debate with colleagues. For all his intellectual gifts, he was happy to "suffer fools" for the sake of good company. He was a true fan of Detroit's Lions and Pistons, enjoyed bowling and softball, discussing politics and relaxing at home with his wife and family.

A Funeral Service was held at the Milford Presbyterian Church with The Rev. Dr. R. John Harris officiating. Memorials may be made to the Legal Aid and Defender Association in Detroit or to the Children's Hospital of Michigan.

For more information please phone (248) 684-6645.

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