



Jeffrey R. Merrill

May 16, 1945 - December 30, 2016

Jeffrey R. Merrill, 71, died Friday, December 30, 2016, with his family by his side. Jeffrey was born and raised in Geneva, New York. He was a graduate of Suffield Academy, Colgate University and the Syracuse University College of Law.

Merrill proudly served as a Judge in the Syracuse City Court from 1984 to 2014. Prior to his seat on the bench, Merrill was a Deputy Sheriff in Ontario, Seneca and Onondaga Counties and an Onondaga County Senior Assistant District Attorney. Merrill was also a devout member of the Masonic community. In his retirement, Jeffrey was a member of the Jamesville Fire Department and served on the board of directors for the Rosamond Gifford Zoo.

Jeffrey is survived by his loving wife of 49 years, Genevieve (Malcolm) Merrill, three children, Malcolm, Travis and Samantha Skule (Jeremy Skule); two grandchildren, Hadley and Grant; his beloved dog Gunnar, his mother Barbara L. Merrill, his sister Marsha Beckelman (John Beckelman), two nephews and one niece. He was preceded by his father, Dr. Reginald G. Merrill, DDS.

A private family service will be held. In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made in Jeffrey's memory to the Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo, Attn: Development Department, 1 Conservation Place, Syracuse, NY 13204.

Tribute Wall



“ One of Jeff's last FB posts was a video of a mother skunk and her FOUR babies--almost as big as she was--scurrying toward a cyclist who was taping their movements. Such a flurry of stripes and black and white fluffy tails! It was a typical post for him--funny and startling even as you thought, Oh NOOO! While his Chambers did boast lots of homage to lizards and even dinosaurs, he also had some great lacrosse graphics. We posed in front of Gary Gait's #22 shirt for a photo after the Honorable Judge Merrill performed our wedding ceremony. We had even changed our wedding date to a Friday afternoon so that we all had the option of attending the SU-Hobart lacrosse game in Geneva the next day! One more thing, though there could be many: this week Dennis was looking for a plaque Jeff gave him thanking him for the graphics he did for his campaigns...he picked it up off a desk in our downstairs guest apartment and an envelope fell out...with over \$250 in Yen from a long-departed guest with a note instructing us to go out to dinner, his treat! We think it's from Jeff, too!

January 10, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ I have great memories of working with Judge Merrill in Drug Court. It was a wonderful experience. He took the job very seriously yet still could bring fun and laughter to the courtroom. What a great loss to the family and the community. My heart reaches out to you, Jeannie a

January 09, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ *Never a more dedicated, well read, and truly compassionate person. He truly sought to listen to all sides. He was a mentor and friend.*

George Alessio

January 09, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ *Genevieve,
Cannot begin to tell you how saddened I was to hear of your loss. I marveled about Jeff when I first worked at the DA's Office. He was gregarious and knew every lawyer in town. Playing golf with him was tons of fun and running into the two of you every now and then at Wegmans always made for a good day.*

Michael Paul Ringwood

January 09, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ *RIP Your Honor Merrill. You've saved my life than once..I thank you for all you've done. My condolences to your family and friends. You've touched many lives your Honor...RIP*

January 08, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ *Jeff was a wonderful person, dedicated and superior attorney , judge and law school Moot Court mentor. My condolences to his family and friends.*

Soft Glow - January 08, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ Sincere sympathies to the Merrill family. It was a pleasure to live in your neighborhood, deliver your newspapers, and visit with Jeff about our wildlife studies. (Louches Powell).

The VanDruff family: Larry, Mary Ann, Brenda, and Tom.

January 08, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ Our family is so saddened to learn of Jeff's passing. We had the great good fortune to live next-door to the Merrill's in Geneva, NY. They are such a wonderful family, treasured friends and no better neighbors could be wished for. Jeff was a like brother to we 3 sisters. He was incredibly bright, inquisitive and tons of fun . Some of our old neighborhood gang (Marvin's, Clark's, etc) have been exchanging sorrow, special memories and lots of laughs about our yrs growing up together. Like his Dad & Mom, Jeff was ahead of his time in his devotion to conservation, animal activism and love of the great outdoors. We send an abundance of love to Barb, Marsha, Jeannie & children. Jeff brought joy into people's lives. We will never forget him. The Kennedy Family (Candice, Christina, Kathryn) - Minnesota & formerly of Geneva, NY.

January 07, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ Jeff and I were Onondaga County deputies back in the late 60's, early 70's. He was like working with a cat on a hot tin roof, full of energy and many creative ways to let it out. Among the madness of each day, his deep love and respect for the law was obviously his guiding principle. The Criminal Procedure Law was newly enacted and Jeff made sure every cop in the county knew its text and subtext. We authored *All You Wanted to Know About the CPL But Were Afraid to Ask*. Not a very original title but it proved its worth during a confusing time. His service as an ADA and City Court Judge morphed into his legend as a skilled attorney and the city and county's most professional, provocative oddball. What a treasure he was and will continue to be in the legal lore of this community. Thanks for the memories pal. You were a hoot!

January 07, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ Sincerest condolences and prayers for family and loved ones of Jeffrey Merrill. Jimmy Tortorelli

January 07, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ Merrill Family. I am sadden to hear of Jeff's passing. I had the unique experience of working with both Judge Merrill in City Court and Mac at the County Clerk's Office (my cubicle buddy). I had lots of good times with both, in and outside of the offices. I have especially enjoyed the Judge's face book posts recently. May he find many happy wombats and other creatures wherever he has found to rest. I will keep my memories of Jeff and continue to bring joy to Malcolm at the Clerk's Office! Right Mac? Please take care of each other and be well.

Gerry VanDerWaer

Candle of Nature - January 07, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ Jeannie, I was so shocked and saddened to read about Jeff's passing in the paper. It was always a joy to run into him on occasion at Pastabilities. His smile, laughter, and enthusiasm were contagious. I am so very sorry for you and your family's loss... for our community's loss.

January 06, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ Jeff was one of the finest, most decent human beings I've known. He was a great judge because he was a great person. It was an honor to serve with him. My deepest condolences to his family.
Hon. Brian D. Burns
Otsego County Judge
Cooperstown, NY

January 06, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ A kind, thoughtful and loving man who will be greatly missed. Love and prayers to his family.

January 06, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ To The Merrill Family,
Our deepest sympathy to you in the passing of Jeffrey.
Your former neighbors, The John Family
Barbara & Brenda
Geneva, N.Y.

January 06, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ Mac, I'm so sorry to hear of your Dads passing. Thinking of you and your family during this difficult time.

January 06, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ Judge Merrill saw it all! He was the most "fun" and spirited Judge I ever met. He had a true passion for life and it showed. My sincere condolences to his family on the loss of someone who was so dynamic and unforgettable. Suzanne Oot

Candle of Love - January 06, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ I am in shock - just heard of your loss this morning - even from Georgia I am saddened - you were an amazing person and a huge benefit to your community and the people and animals of your state. You believed in the Technical Large Animal Emergency Rescue efforts from the beginning - and I appreciated the faith in what I was doing - and the mentorship both in person and via FB. I am sorry for your loss. Great man. Hugs to those in the family and friends...
Dr. Rebecca Gimenez

January 06, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ I am very saddened to learn of Jeff's death. I heard he was ill, but hoped it would not be fatal. I, like many others, have special memories about Jeff, going back to the Sheriff's Office, the D.A.'s Office, and his time on the bench. He was a very special person, and will be missed. My condolences to Jeannie and his entire family. Sam Vavonese

January 06, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ JUDGE MERRILL WAS ONE OF A KIND. A TRUE GEM. I HAD THE HONOR OF WORKING IN HIS COURTROOM FOR MANY YEARS. WHILE WORKING IN TRAFFIC COURT, HE WOULD TELL THE CROWD THAT THEY WOULD NOT GET A BETTER DEAL ANYWHERE, THAT HE WAS THE "WALMART OF JUSTICE". REST IN PEACE YOUR HONOR

RETIRED DEPUTY MIKE BARTOWSKI

January 05, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ Gene and family,
I was deeply saddened to hear of the death of Jeff. He was truly an interesting individual and a fair and just judge. My Dad used to work with him in the DAO. One time he brought me to see Jeff's office in City Court - I'd never seen anything like it! On occasion, I had to bring clients in front of him and was always impressed with how he handled their cases. He was an inspiration. I also enjoyed his postings on Facebook. My thoughts and prayers are with you all.

January 05, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ This is a tough one! I've known Jeff over 40 years. He was the most kind, generous and caring friend I've ever known! I hold many fun and happy memories and am happy to have shared in great company with Jeff as a Masonic brother. With great sadness. I extend my sincerest sympathies from me and Carolyn to Ginny and the family and also to my fellow friends who will miss dearly this wonderful man! James and Carolyn Buckbee

January 05, 2017 at 12:00 AM



*“ I had the privilege of practicing law in the same era with Jeff and then before him on the bench for many years. Among many great attributes, I would say his greatest was the ability to maintain the same even and sometimes humorous temperament over many years. He was a breath of fresh air and continues to be missed.
Sam Tamburo Esq.*

January 05, 2017 at 12:00 AM



*“ I am surprised and saddened by the loss of Judge Merrill. I cannot fully express how grateful I am to have known him, although the circumstances were not ideal. Judge Merrill was strength for so many parents of addicts when they couldn't be, and I am glad he was there when our family needed. I am deeply sorry to his family - his retirement was short-lived and I sincerely hope he enjoyed it. Please know your husband, father, and friend made a difference in so many lives. He will be missed.
With deepest regard, Donna Ancillotti*

January 05, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ I am very sorry to hear about Judge Merrill. He was an awesome guy!! My sincere condolences, GOD BLESS. Tom Manfredi

January 05, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ sorry for your loss judge merril was a hard guy in drug court but he did it to save people lives if it was not for him my life might have ended back then,for that i'll always appreciate his toughness so go home to be with the lord you'll be sincerly missed.

January 05, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ *Genevieve, Barbara and Family,
I am so sorry and distressed to hear of Jeff's passing. We have all
lost a great colleague and friend. May he find peace.*
Robert Lahm

January 05, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ *I wish to extend my sincere condolences to Judge Merrill's family.
As a defense attorney I had the pleasure (and sometimes pain) of
appearing in his Court.
His sense of humor, his laugh and his kindness toward me made
me like him even when we disagreed. I am deeply saddened by his
loss and the universe is a bit less zany and I for one feel deprived .
Sincerely, Michael J. Younis*

January 05, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ *I was truly shocked and saddend to hear of the recent passing of
Jeff. It was a previlage to call him friend. May he rest in peace. My
sincere condolences to his family and multitude of friends. Hon.
John M. Lischak*

January 05, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ Great man, great judge, and consummate "ball buster". One day he flew through an intersection stopping short of hitting me while blaring the horn on his truck - very startled I looked up to see him laughing his ass off behind the wheel. He was quite proud of himself in court telling everyone how he made me crap my pants. He helped many people find sobriety - through treatment or incarceration. He touched a lot of lives whether you were a fellow attorney or a defendant in his courtroom. He was missed the minute he left the bench and is surely missed now. Talking to a friend in the DA's office this week, she said, Judge Merrill "really knew how to live". I think that is a great way to remember him.

January 05, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ Judge Merrill was the very best judge I ever had the privilege to work for. His sense of humor and fair play were known to everyone that knew him in the court system. My sympathy to Jeanie and the children and all his family and friends. court attendant Donna Greene

January 05, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ Sorry for your loss Mrs. Merrill. I was always so very happy when I ran into him. The last time we had a conversation I shared with him something I wanted to pursue, and like always he encouraged me. Judge Merrill, will truly be missed, I really respected his honesty, and appreciated every piece of advice he gave me over the years.

January 05, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ I first met Jeff wjhen he was an ADA and i was a police officer. I learned to be a better officer with his guidance. He had a great sense of humor and loved the law! We lost touch until recently and i will miss him. My condolences to his wife, children and his friends. Rest in peace your honor.

January 05, 2017 at 12:00 AM



“ I never had a case with Jeff before he went on the bench and my only appearance in his court was to make sure that my client in Federal Court did not have a conflict with Jeff. We talked on occasion about environmental issues. He was always a delight with a great temperament. My best wishes and sympathy to his family in this time of loss. .

January 05, 2017 at 12:00 AM