

Remarks of Senior Circuit Judge Frank M. Coffin
on the occasion of the presentation of a portrait of
Senior Circuit Judge Levin H. Campbell, U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit,
Boston, Massachusetts, October 9, 1992.

Chief Judge Breyer, colleagues, friends and family of Judge Campbell. I acknowledge with gratitude the opportunity to say a few words in honor and appreciation of my revered colleague, Lee Campbell.

It is singularly appropriate that we gather here to receive this portrait, for this, the fifth judicial portrait in our modern series, is a tribute to the founder of this series. It was only because Judge Campbell, long ago, began to drum away at the desirability of memorializing those who have long served this bench that we now have the portraits of Judges Magruder, Aldrich, Coffin, and Bownes. And now Marion Miller, having practiced on me and District Judge Frank Murray, has produced a portrait, capturing both the external lineaments and living spirit of Judge Campbell.

Lee's role in being our portrait gadfly gives me the focus for my remarks. Any of us could speak at length of Lee's qualities as a colleague - his equability, openness, civility, instinct for fairness - and two decades of grappling, with insight and diligence, matters small and portentous. But what is often overlooked, yet is of increasing importance, is a concern for the institution of judging. This is what is unique about Judge Campbell. Having been a state legislator and, within what must have been a traumatic twelve month period, having served as a state superior court judge, a federal district judge, and, finally, a federal circuit judge, he came to us with a profound respect for the institutions of states as well as the national government.

Armed with a Burkeian respect for the past but openness to the future, Judge Campbell contributed much to our court. In addition to our contemporary portrait gallery, he gently persuaded me, while sitting on a beach in San Juan, to institute, for our court, the office of staff attorney, without which we could not have coped with our remorseless caseload increase. As chief judge, he was the first to work with a circuit executive, our former clerk Dana Gallup. And, if Chief Judge Breyer and Judge Woodlock can claim the paternity of the forthcoming courthouse here in Boston, Judge Campbell is surely the grandfather.

But his work for the judiciary extended through the entire system. He was not merely a member of the Judicial Conference of the United States, but served on its Executive Committee. He still serves as chair of the Conference's important Committee to Review Circuit Council Conduct and Disability Orders. He was one of Chief Justice Rehnquist's appointees to the path-breaking Federal Courts Study Committee and spent countless hours of quiet suasion and painstaking drafting in contributing to the Committee's seminal report.

Perhaps his greatest honor and challenge is to have been named by the Chief Justice to the existing National Commission on Judicial Disability and Removal. After many decades of freedom from judicial scandal, three federal judges were recently impeached in as many years. Proposals were quick to spring up, providing for a fast track impeachment process, automatic removal for conviction of any felony, term limitations on judicial office, removal either within the judiciary or by an independent body, and even elections subject to recall. Instead of acting immediately on any of these, the Congress opted to create the National Commission. And within this forum Judge Campbell must once again work patiently and quietly with colleagues, striving to avoid procedures, laws, constitutional amendments, and institutions which would threaten the continued independence of the federal judiciary.

I am grateful that he serves on the Commission and wish him continued energy, wisdom, and courage.