

## In Memoriam

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### HON. NATHANIEL PARRISH CONREY

Presiding Justice of the District Court of Appeal of the State of California, 1913-1935; Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of California, 1935-1936.

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At a regular session of the Supreme Court held on December 1, 1936, the following proceedings were had in honor of the memory of the late Honorable Nathaniel Parrish Conrey, Associate Justice.

Honorable Frank G. Finlayson presented a memorial to the late Associate Justice Conrey, reading as hereafter set forth in full, and moved that the court enter an order in accord with the resolution of the Los Angeles Bar Association, and further moved that when the court adjourns this day, it do so in honor of our distinguished and beloved co-worker, the late Justice Conrey. He addressed the court as follows:

May It Please the Court:

On behalf of the Los Angeles Bar Association, of which he was for so long a loved and honored member, we appear here today to pay some slight tribute to the memory of a distinguished lawyer and jurist, the late Nathaniel P. Conrey. A committee of the Los Angeles Bar Association was appointed to prepare a suitable memorial and I now have the honor of presenting that memorial to this court.

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**MEMORIAL TO****HONORABLE NATHANIEL PARRISH CONREY**

**Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of California  
1935-1936.**

It has pleased Divine Providence to close the earthly career of Nathaniel Parrish Conrey, late Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the State of California. It is altogether fitting that the members of the bar association of the county wherein he worked so faithfully and wrought so admirably should express their high appreciation of his long record of devoted and efficient public service and pay tribute to his character, learning and judicial ability.

Born in Indiana on June 30, 1860, Judge Conrey, after graduating from Asbury (now De Pauw) University and from the University of Michigan Law School, came to Los Angeles in 1884, where he practiced his profession with distinction and ability until his election to the Superior Court for Los Angeles County in 1900. During this period he rendered effective and worthy public service—in 1886-1887 as city attorney for Pasadena, in 1897-1898 as a member of the Board of Education of the city of Los Angeles, in 1899 and 1900 as Assemblyman from the Seventy-fifth Assembly District and as president of the board of trustees of the State Normal School at Los Angeles.

On the trial bench Judge Conrey presided with a quiet dignity and an unflinching courtesy and grace. Possessing these qualities himself, he looked for them in others, and by the very force of his example the forensic efforts of contending counsel were kept within the bounds of commendable restraint and propriety of speech.

He served as Superior Court Judge for Los Angeles County until October, 1913, when Governor Hiram W. Johnson, in fitting recognition of his eminent ability and sterling worth, appointed him Presiding Justice of the District Court of Appeal for the Second District.

Cordial with his associates and tolerant of their opinions, endowed with a mind that was quick to pierce unerringly to the very heart of the questions of law presented by mem-

bers of the bar in their arguments, and administering the affairs of the tribunal over which he presided with a view to the utmost output consistent with well-considered work, he made an ideal presiding justice of an appellate tribunal.

The high quality of Justice Conrey's services as Presiding Justice of the District Court of Appeal won universal recognition, and in September, 1935, Governor Frank F. Merriam, in well-founded appreciation of his merit and learning, appointed him Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of this State, where he continued to serve until November 2, 1936, on which day, after a long life of useful service to his fellow men, he entered upon his final rest and, wrapping the drapery of his couch about him, lay down to pleasant dreams.

In the death of Justice Conrey the legal profession has lost an outstanding and prominent member, the highest court of California a high-minded and able justice, and the State one of its finest citizens.

Our friend, for as such it greatly pleases us to speak of him, had a pleasing and graceful personality of unusual charm. His dominant traits of character were conscientious fidelity to duty, gentleness and a kindly affection for his fellow men. His graciousness went forth to young and old alike, to men of high and low degree without distinction. Naturally quiet and gentle in manner, when occasion required he could be firm as granite; for his ardent soul brooked no breach of decorum or trifling with justice.

He was widely read in the science of jurisprudence, was steeped in the philosophy of the law and was experienced in its administration. But more than this, he was a lover of literature and of the fine arts. In addition to his technical equipment he had that culture and breadth of view so valuable in high judicial office. His intimate familiarity with the best in literature gave to his judicial opinions an unusual clarity and attractive style. He was never satisfied with a judicial utterance until he had subjected it to such careful scrutiny that the exposition of his views and the process of his reasoning were made lucid and convincing.

No tribute to Justice Conrey, however brief, would be complete which touched only upon his professional achievement. His early studies, supplemented later by wide read-

ing, imbued him with an enduring appreciation of the good, the true and the beautiful, and he was, in every sense, a man of the highest culture. The joys of friendship were his constant and supreme delight.

In the passing of Nathaniel Parrish Conrey we have lost a genial and gracious friend. Mourning our loss, but inspired by the example of his devotion to duty and enriched by the memory of his friendship, we of the Los Angeles Bar Association, fellow-workers with him in the cause of justice, return to our labors, heartened by the thought that though death has removed him from our midst, his memory shall live on and the lessons of his long life of devoted service shall abide with us forevermore; wherefore, be it

Resolved, That this testimonial of our esteem and affection for Mr. Justice Conrey be presented to the Supreme Court of California with the request that it be entered upon the records of the court as a lasting memorial to his work and attainments; that the sincere sympathy of the members of the bench and bar of Los Angeles County be and it is extended to the widow and children to comfort them in their hour of sorrow and distress; and that the court be requested to direct its clerk to transmit to them a copy hereof.

LOUIS W. MYERS,  
FRANK G. FINLAYSON,  
CURTIS D. WILBUR,  
EDWARD D. LYMAN,  
FRANK B. BELCHER,  
LOYD WRIGHT,

Committee of Los Angeles Bar Association.

Chief Justice Waste, replying on behalf of the court, said:

Gentlemen of the Bar: The members of the court appreciate and thank you for your labors in preparing and presenting to the court the splendid memorial as a tribute to the services and memory of Mr. Associate Justice Conrey, a former member of the Supreme Court.

Much has been spoken and written concerning Justice Conrey since his passing a few weeks ago. In response to the memorial presented today, the court repeats, in part, the tribute prepared by the Chief Justice at the time of the announcement of his passing.

Extended or fulsome praise can have no place in the life estimate of a modest man. Mr. Justice Conrey was modest to the point of self-effacement. It took close association and special occasions to reveal his strength of mind, his conviction of purpose, and his tenderness of heart. Although his term of service with the Supreme Court was short, his work was of the particularly high order that always characterized his judicial efforts. In his association with his fellow members of the high court he was pleasant and congenial, and, in the close relationship that is engendered by the work of the justices, he was cordial, helpful and inspiring.

Mr. Justice Conrey had all the characteristics of an ideal judicial officer. He was learned in the law, possessed of a keen insight into human nature, bold in sustaining decisions once arrived at, and an indefatigable worker. He was a clear-headed thinker. His feet were always on the ground. With these accomplishments he coupled a keen sense of humor; and his whole temperament was so balanced that he never appeared disconcerted or distressed by the circumstances surrounding him.

It was in the close circle of his intimate friends that Mr. Justice Conrey was best known. He was kindly, considerate, well-read, and a charming conversationalist. Of him it may truly be said: "To know him was to love him." As most appropriately stated by a devoted member of his family, those closely connected with him discerned not only the professional brother, but the spiritual quality, the idealism and humor and wisdom that made him what he was. He looked upon life as an adventure, and met it gallantly to the last.

Failing health, brought about by a serious fall just before Justice Conrey entered upon his duties as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, led him to decline to be a candidate to succeed himself at the recent election. His letter to the Governor in this connection was a beautiful expression of his appreciation of the honors that had come to him during his long judicial career. His passing, the day before he would otherwise have been nominated by the people of the State to retain his position on the high court in which his judicial labors culminated, seems almost to have been in answer to a prayer.

Shortly after he announced his determination not to be a candidate to succeed himself, the Los Angeles Bar Associa-

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tion joined members of the bench and bar of California in paying tribute to Mr. Justice Conrey, congratulating him upon his distinguished record in the courts of this State, and wishing him a well-earned rest after his retirement from the bench. That rest is now his.

The State of California has lost a most devoted servant. While he lived, the judicial department of the State was richer because of his living. It is poorer, now that he has passed to the court above.

The memorial presented on behalf of the Los Angeles Bar Association will be received and spread upon the minutes of the court of this date, and will be printed in the bound volume of the California Reports.

The Chief Justice further directed that the adjournment be taken pursuant to the motion.