

A Man of Decisions

John Thomas Curtin

"The court," said John Thomas Curtin, "should be a place where anybody can come—whatever they have in their pocket—and be able to file a complaint in simple fashion and at least have somebody give consideration to it and give them an opportunity to be heard." Yesterday,

Man
in the
News

in the United States District Court in Buffalo, Judge Curtin gave consideration to a complaint brought by state prisoners at Attica and declined their request for a temporary injunction to safeguard them from alleged physical abuse at the hands of prison officials.

"The courts," he observed a short time later, "can't do everything."

The judge, a trim, 50-year-old man with gray-blue eyes and brown hair salted with gray, speaks out of experience as a legal general practitioner, as the United States Attorney for the Western District of New York and—for the last four years—as a judge.

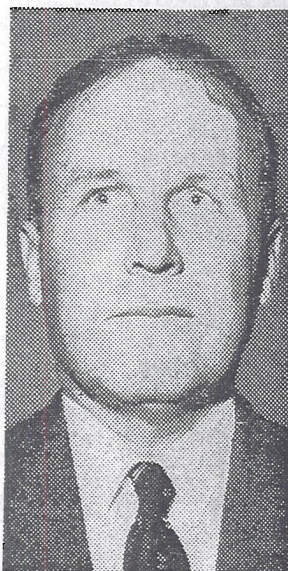
It was Judge Curtin who, last June, ordered the state to stop enforcing its new one-year residency requirement for welfare applicants and who later was a member of a three-judge panel that ruled the requirement unconstitutional.

A 'Kennedy Man'

Last year, in a 93-page decision, he ruled that the City of Lackawanna had discriminated against Negroes by blocking the construction of 138 low-cost homes in a nearly all-white neighborhood.

Although his nomination to the Federal bench came formally from President Lyndon B. Johnson, Judge Curtin was recommended for the post by the late Senator Robert F. Kennedy and is known as a "Kennedy man" in Buffalo legal circles. His appointment as United States Attorney came in 1961 from President John F. Kennedy, and he served in the job while Robert F. Kennedy was United States Attorney General.

Prominently displayed in the judge's chambers are a photograph of the late President and a sketch of his brother.



Associated Press

Known in Buffalo as
"a Kennedy man."

decorations, he replied only, "I was there."

It was during his World War II service that he met some lawyers and became interested in their profession. When he left the service at the end of the war, with the rank of captain, he had decided to make the law his career.

He obtained his bachelor of science degree from Canisius, entered the University of Buffalo Law School and was admitted to the bar in 1949 after earning his bachelor of laws degree.

His career in private practice, which continued until his appointment in 1961 as United States Attorney, was interrupted for 18 months during the Korean war, when he was recalled by the marines to serve at Cherry Point, N. C., doing mainly legal work. The judge is slightly uncertain about his present status with the marines reserves, but his most recent rank was lieutenant colonel.

Judge Curtin, his wife, the former Jane Good, whom he married in 1952, their seven children and Mrs. Curtin's mother make their home in an 11-room, three-story frame house with a red brick chimney in a suburban setting in north Buffalo.

The eldest of the Curtin children, Ann, 17—the others are John, 15, Patricia, 14, Eileen, 12, Mary Ellen, 10 and the twins, Mark and William, 7 — describes her father as a "pretty mod" dresser who likes colored shirts, but the judge, given an opportunity for rebuttal, observed, "You have to be pretty careful with that age group."

But it is to be noted that the judge's sideburns extend the length of his ears, that he keeps in shape by jogging, playing tennis and paddle ball and by skiing on family outings in the winter. He has given up his occasional cigar and recently finished reading "Future Shock."

"He's a pretty good father

Judge Curtin, the eldest of four sons of the former Ella Quigley and John J. Curtin, a superintendent of mills for the Bethlehem Steel Corporation at Lackawanna, was born in Buffalo on Aug. 24, 1921.

After attending S. Teresa's grammar school and graduating from Canisius High School, he entered Canisius College in 1939 as a chemistry major, influenced by his father's work toward a career in engineering.

In 1942, he volunteered for service with the Marines, was trained as a pilot, and flew dive bombers and torpedo planes on about 35 missions in the Pacific theater of operations. Asked about