

Versatile Lawyer

Edward Samuel Greenbaum

WHEN Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson presented the Distinguished Service Medal to Edward Samuel Greenbaum in 1945, he cited the New York lawyer for his "extraordinary ability" to manage "complex, highly important matters of infinite variety with a quick and sure hand." That quick, sure/hand, which Man in the News has been busy lately in the complex negotiations to bring Stalin's

daughter, Svetlana Alliluyeva, has worked for such varied clients as Mrs. Nelson A. Rockefeller in a child custody fight with her former husband Dr. James Slater Murphy, for the Downton West Small Business Survival Committee in its battle to stop the World Trade Center; for the Farmers Union in defense of a libel action; for The Nation in its effort to win readmission to libraries in New York City public schools, and for Harper & Row in its dispute with Mrs. John F. Kennedy over the William Manchester book "The Death of a President."

"Eddie Greenbaum is the most versatile lawyer I know," said his law partner of 51 years, Herbert A. Wolff. "He tries cases. He argues appeals. He does family counseling, corporate work, administers estates. Today, when everyone is a specialist, you'd have to call him an old-fashioned lawyer. He can tackle almost anything."

An Avuncular Arm

Visitors to his corner office on the 22d floor of 285 Madison Avenue, at 40th Street, find that his method is warmth, spread, according to a long-time friend, with an easy smile, a twinkling eye and an avuncular arm around the shoulder.

"He'd never enter into a plain client-lawyer relationship with you," said a woman whose family Mr. Greenbaum has advised for more than 40 years. "Before he makes a move, he sits you down and makes you tell him exactly how you feel about the matter."

Mr. Greenbaum, 77 on his last birthday, with thinning and graying hair, and a bit deaf—"he doesn't like it noticed," said a friend—still carries a full burden of work for his firm, Greenbaum, Wolff & Ernst, although in recent years he has done a great deal of it in his white Victorian house on Mercer Street in Princeton, N. J.

"He's a prodigious worker," said a colleague. "A man of boundless energy," said a friend, recalling that when he goes to a cocktail party he talks to everyone present with engaging enthusiasm and finally "has to be swept out with the last olive pit" by the weary hostess.

An Artful Storyteller

Storytelling — done with dramatic flourishes and punctuated with some rhetorical questions as "And what do you think I told him then?" — is a Greenbaum specialty. When he quotes a woman, his voice rises to a falsetto whine. When he quotes a man, he lowers his chin and deepens his voice to the bass register.



The New York Times

Undaunted by complexity

into public affairs. In the nineteen-twenties he participated in a broad study of legal practice in the United States sponsored by Johns Hopkins University. The work was the foundation of a lifelong interest in court reform. He was one of the chief campaigners for the reorganization of the New York courts that was effected in 1960 and 1961.

He served on the commission appointed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to draft liquor controls after the repeal of Prohibition and on the state commission named by Gov. Thomas E. Dewey to reorganize the Long Island Rail Road after a series of accidents.

In 1957, he was named an alternate delegate to the United Nations by President Eisenhower and was successful in getting the General Assembly to approve a resolution calling for free elections in North and South Korea.

Of all his public work, General Greenbaum takes greatest pride in his Army service. When color blindness barred him from officer's training in 1917, he enlisted as a private and then did such a good job at Camp Upton that he was commissioned a captain in one jump.

He re-entered the Army in 1940 with a commission as a lieutenant colonel. He rose to brigadier general and became a principal aide to Secretary Patterson.

The Secretary cited him as a "wise counselor to those in the highest positions and a staunch friend to those who, in inconspicuous positions, felt the hardships of war."

Mr. Greenbaum, a Democrat, is a founder of the Jewish Big Brothers, an organization that helps youths, and has been an unusually active member of the American, City of New York and New York State bar associations.

He was married in 1920 to Dorothea Schwarcz, a professional sculptor whose works have been shown at the Whitney Museum of American Art. They have two sons—David, a physician, and Daniel, a civil engineer — and three grandchildren. Friends describe the Greenbaums as "a happy couple" and "a delightful pair to have at a party."

Mr. Greenbaum has given up golf but still is an enthusiastic traveler. Last year he went to Japan as a tourist and all the way to San Francisco to help a friend celebrate a birthday.

On his own 76th birthday last year, a friend called his home to congratulate him and then teased him about taking a day off from work. He replied in mock gruffness: "You're damn right. Once every 76 years."

General Greenbaum, as his friends call him—the title is a holdover from his Army service in both World Wars—was born in New York on April 13, 1890, the second son of Samuel Greenbaum, a State Supreme Court justice. After studies at the Horace Mann School and Williams College, he decided to follow his father and his elder brother, Lawrence, into the law and went to the Columbia Law School.

On May 15, 1915, the brothers joined Mr. Wolff, a Columbia classmate of Edward's, and Morris Ernst in setting up their firm in a small, second-floor office at 2 Rector Street. The rent was cheaper on that floor because the Ninth Avenue El clicked and clattered outside the windows.

As their practice grew, Edward Greenbaum found himself drawn increasingly