DEATH OF JUSTICE BRENNAN

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

MONDAY, OCTOBER 6, 1997

Present: CHIEF JUSTICE REHNQUIST, JUSTICE STEVENS, JUSTICE O'CONNOR, JUSTICE SCALIA, JUSTICE KENNEDY, JUSTICE SOUTER, JUSTICE THOMAS, JUSTICE GINSBURG, and JUSTICE BREYER.

THE CHIEF JUSTICE said:

As we open this morning, I note with sadness that our friend and colleague, William Joseph Brennan, Jr., a retired Justice of this Court, died on July 24, 1997, at Arlington, Virginia.

Born in Newark, New Jersey, on April 25, 1906, William Brennan was the second of eight children born to Irish parents who emigrated to the United States in 1890. An outstanding student from an early age, he was an honor student of the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and graduated high in his class at Harvard Law School.

Justice Brennan joined a prominent New Jersey law firm where he specialized in labor law. He was an Army officer during World War II and served on the staff of the Undersecretary of War. Following a brief return to private practice after the war, he began his judicial career. He moved rapidly from the state trial bench to the New Jersey Supreme Court. President Eisenhower nominated him to this Court in 1956.

Justice Brennan authored many landmark opinions while on the bench of this Court. He became a champion of an expansive view of constitutional protection of individual

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rights. Following his retirement in 1990 after 33 years on this bench, Justice Brennan often frequented the building and continued a warm relationship with his former colleagues.

The members of this Court will greatly miss Justice Brennan's wit and his friendly, buoyant spirit, and I speak for them in expressing our profound sympathy to Mrs. Brennan, to his daughter and two sons, and to all those whose lives were touched by this remarkable man. The recess the Court takes this month will be in his memory. At an appropriate time, the traditional memorial observance of the Court and the Bar of this Court will be held in this Courtroom.