

DEATH OF JUSTICE WHITE

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 2002

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 want to pay tribute to our friend and colleague Byron R. White, a retired Justice of this Court, who died yesterday morning in Colorado.

Byron White was nominated to the Court by President Kennedy on April 3, 1962, and was confirmed by the Senate eight days later. He took the oath of office forty years ago today, on April 16, 1962. He was the 93rd Justice to serve on this Court.

Justice White was born and raised in Colorado. He was a rare combination of brilliant scholar and gifted athlete. He attended the University of Colorado, earning ten varsity letters, winning a Rhodes scholarship to Oxford. Before attending Oxford, he played professional football for the old Pittsburgh Pirates. When he returned from Oxford, he attended Yale Law School while playing football for the Detroit Lions on the weekends. He served as an intelligence officer for the Navy during World War II.

Justice White was graduated from Yale Law School, earning the Cullen Prize for high academic grades. He clerked for Chief Justice Vinson and then returned home to Colorado where he practiced law for fourteen years, before joining the

Justice Department as deputy attorney general under Robert Kennedy. Less than a year later, President Kennedy named him to the Court.

Justice White was an able colleague and a good friend. He came as close as any to meriting Matthew Arnold's description of Sophocles: he "saw life steadily and he saw it whole." All of us who served with him feel a sense of personal loss. Our condolences go out to his wife, Marion, his two children, and their families.

At an appropriate time in the fall, the traditional memorial observance of the Court and the Bar will be held in this Courtroom.