

Grady, Joseph Harold, 1917- 2002

Known for his quiet, unglamorous approach to legal debate, Judge J. Harold Grady, the newly appointed chief judge of the Supreme Bench, can be firm and decisive when a tough decision is finally placed before him.

Although he has been a member of the Supreme Bench since 1962, Judge Grady, who was mayor of Baltimore from 1959 to 1962 and is a former prosecutor, still carries with him the sense of openness and eager desire for friendship that is most often seen in political circles.

Sun, Jan. 3, 1980

Only recently, Judge Grady declared that a prosecutor illegally suppressed evidence, and as a result the court was required to overturn a jury conviction against James H. Watkins, a former police lieutenant colonel, who was tried on corruption charges.

These were widely acknowledged to be unusual decisions because they upset jury trial verdicts. But Judge Grady made his decisions after hearing repeated legal arguments and closely questioning the lawyers involved.

"His sense of the law is derived from his days as a excellent, probing prosecutor when he sought facts, facts, facts," a

But this gregarious trait can be misleading in a judge, especially if it is used to scold only mildly a prosecutor who is clearly in error and should know better. Or, as often happens with Judge Grady, a legal fumble is turned aside with a good-humored phrase.

Several years ago, in a controversial case, Judge Grady granted a new trial to Charles (Chicken Charlie) Battaglia, once convicted of murder, after finding that two prosecution witnesses wanted to change their testimony.

friend said recently of Judge Grady. "No one can say his law lacks firm ground when he decides."

From MD Dept. blog. query File