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The Baltimore Sun

March 9, 2001 Friday FINAL EDITION

**SECTION:** LOCAL, Pg. 5B**LENGTH:** 670 words**HEADLINE:** Anthony Federico, 87, gained fame as lawyer for killer in 1952 case**BYLINE:** Frederick N. Rasmussen**SOURCE:** SUN STAFF**BODY:**

Anthony S. Federico Sr., a prominent Baltimore attorney who defended the killer in a sensational 1952 murder case, died Wednesday of pneumonia at Gilchrist Center for Hospice Care in Towson. He was 87 and had lived on Springlake Way in Homeland for many years.

For more than 50 years, "Mr. Rico," as he was known by clients, kept law offices in the Munsey Building downtown and on Gay Street. He retired last summer because of failing health.

He earned a measure of fame when he defended G. **Edward Grammer**, a metals company executive who killed his wife, Dorothy May **Grammer**, 33, the mother of three daughters, in 1952.

The case, which gained national attention, made local criminal history as the "almost perfect crime."

Just after midnight Aug. 20, 1952, a black Chrysler four-door sedan careered down Taylor Avenue, then veered off the road, hit a tree and turned over on its right side.

The car narrowly missed a Baltimore County police cruiser parked nearby. When the two officers reached the auto, they found the body of Mrs. **Grammer** under the dashboard.

Medical examiner Dr. Russell S. Fisher quickly concluded that she had been killed before the car rolled down the hill. "Murder — no ifs, ands or buts," he said.

The investigation focused on Mr. **Grammer**, who later confessed to the crime. His motive was that he was in love with another woman. After bludgeoning his wife, he placed a stone on the car's accelerator and sent it on its way.

After a nine-day trial, Mr. **Grammer** was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to death. He was executed June 11, 1954.

"The evidence was so overwhelming and irrefutable, it was hard for Tony to come up with much of a defense. He really had very little to work with," said Anselm Sodaro, who retired as chief judge of the Supreme Bench of Baltimore City. He prosecuted the case.

"Because **Grammer's** hanging was botched, he was the last person to be hung in Maryland. After that, the state ended all executions by hanging," Judge Sodaro said.

Mr. Federico "was much identified with the **Grammer** case throughout his career. People were always walking up to him and asking about it," said his son, Philip C. Federico, a Baltimore attorney.

"He was a very good defense lawyer and very forceful," Judge Sodaro said of Mr. Federico. "He set a certain tone in the courtroom. Tony was always very respectful in addressing the court, something that is lacking in courtrooms today. When he made objections, he stood up."

Anthony Federico, 87, gained fame as lawyer for killer in 1952 case The

With the advent of the public defender's office in the 1970s, Mr. Federico increasingly focused on the general practice of law.

He was a tall man who favored finely tailored suits, colorful hand-painted Italian silk neckties and, depending on the season, straw or felt hats.

He enjoyed smoking Havana cigars and dining with friends in the now-defunct Miller Brothers restaurant on Fayette Street, where he was a founding member of the "Round Table."

Born in Baltimore, the son of Italian immigrants from Sicily, Mr. Federico was raised near Belair Market. A 1932 graduate of Calvert Hall College, he earned his law degree from the University of Baltimore in 1935. After completing a two-year apprenticeship, he was admitted to the bar in 1937.

Mr. Federico's marriage to Jean Sokoloski ended in divorce. In 1956, he married Susannah Cockey, who died in 1995.

He was a member of Associated Italian American Charities and a founding member of the Italian American Civic Club of Maryland.

He enjoyed gourmet cooking, traveling by steamship and fishing.

He was a communicant of the Roman Catholic Cathedral of Mary Our Queen, 5300 N. Charles St., where a Mass of Christian burial will be offered at 2 p.m. today.

Mr. Federico is survived by four other sons, Anthony S. Federico Jr. of Homeland, Frank J. Federico of Phoenix in Baltimore County, Michael S. Federico of Ruxton and Christopher P. Federico of Lutherville; two daughters, Maria F. Calder of Sparks and Paula F. Conley of Chapel Hill, N.C.; and 17 grandchildren.

**GRAPHIC:** Photo(s), Anthony Federico had law offices in the Munsey Building and, on Gay Street for 50 years.

**LOAD-DATE:** March 9, 2001