

**Remarks by Chief Justice J. Derek Green
On the Passing of Frank Rudolph Gronich,
Former Member of the Law Society of Newfoundland and Labrador**

**Court of Appeal
St. John's, NL
April 21, 2015**

Before proceeding with regular applications this morning, I want to take a few moments to note for the record the death of Frank Rudolph Gronich, former member of the Law Society, who passed away on April 18, 2015 at the age of 83 years. Frank's funeral service is being held this morning.

Frank Gronich came to the law later in his life after a career with his wife, Eileen, in business in Corner Brook as a florist. He had arrived in Newfoundland as a 10 year old immigrant from Germany and settled in Corner Brook. He and Eileen were very successful in their florist business. During his time in Corner Brook Frank was very involved in the community. He was one of the founders of the local SPCA and served in a number of capacities in organizations promoting theatre in the City.

In 1972, when in his early forties, he and Eileen took the courageous step of selling their business and travelling the world for two years. Then he went to Memorial University where he earned a degree in ancient history and political science and ultimately went to Dalhousie Law School. He served articles in the provincial Department of Justice. Justice Seamus O'Regan, who was working in the Department at that time, mentioned to me recently that Frank was the only articling student he knew who drove a Mercedes 450. Frank was called to the bar in 1980 and then took a position as Crown prosecutor with the Department of Justice. He served as a Crown counsel on the criminal side of the Department for the rest of his career, appearing primarily in the Provincial Court. He retired in the early 1990s but continued, I believe, to do some work for the Department on a contractual basis thereafter.

These bare career facts, of course, do not really tell much about the man himself. What is more important is how he treated and interacted with others in the course of his life. On that scorecard, Frank rates very highly. From conversations I have had with former employees who worked with Frank in the Department of Justice, a picture of a kind and empathetic person emerges. While always seeking to uphold high professional standards, he nevertheless exhibited understanding about the personal needs of the younger lawyers he supervised. He was a solid administrator and was known as a gentleman who never gave offence and always considered the interests of others in administrative decisions he made. He had a quiet sense of humour but never exercised it at anyone else's expense.

Those with whom he came into contact universally left his company feeling respected and valued. He was always balanced in the way he presented his cases in court. Even those persons for whom he was responsible for prosecuting and jailing often had a grudging respect for him, like the break and entry artist who, after getting out of jail, subsequently showed up at Frank's house as part of a moving team to move furniture into a new house Frank was occupying. Both Frank and the individual concerned had a chuckle about the differing roles they found themselves in. Frank was prepared to turn a new page and start from a blank slate, and the former convict was prepared to put his resentments behind him and to let bygones be bygones.

In the course of his work, Frank was tasked with providing advice to the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary. He is fondly remembered by the police as someone who took time to provide instruction to officers about the court process and how to present their evidence in court effectively and efficiently.

Frank Gronich touched many people during his life. They are the better for it. He will be missed by his friends and former colleagues. To his wife Eileen, his sister Margaret and his extended family, I extend condolences on behalf of the judges and staff of the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I direct that a transcript of these remarks be prepared and forwarded to the family.