

Document#18

Spring 2007 - Issue of Bishop Timon-
Saint Jude-High School News Letter



Timon Alumni Make A Judicial Impact In Our Community . . .

Would you feel more comfortable knowing that your civil rights and national security often rest in the hands of Timon grads? Hopefully you would. Because, in fact, they often do.

Every day, U.S. District Court Judges William M. Skretny, Class of '62, and H. Kenneth Schroeder, Jr., Class of '54, try cases that have far reaching implications. These Timon grads deeply appreciate that the decisions they render will affect every U.S. citizen for generations to come.

That's an immense dose of responsibility on a daily basis. The task often made even more daunting by intense local, national, and even international media attention. (In fact, Judge Skretny appeared on the front page of *The Buffalo News* regarding casino litigation the week this article was written. His rulings on the Seneca Nation's claim to casino land in the City of Buffalo could ultimately impact both Buffalo and the Seneca Nation for generations to come.)

Consider the infamous Lackawanna Six terrorism prosecution. Both Judge Skretny and Judge Schroeder were involved in this case. Imagine walking that fine line between assuring the security of the nation and guaranteeing the rights of the individual. Without careful jurisprudence, either the safety – or the freedoms – of the American people could be dangerously compromised. This is the kind of challenge federal judges face daily.

Even before being appointed to the Federal Court, Skretny and Schroeder had surprisingly similar – and meteoric – rises through the legal world. Both attended Canisius College as well as Bishop Timon High School. Interestingly, both claimed not to be particularly outstanding high school students. (Skretny considers himself an average kid who had to work hard. Schroeder labels himself a high school "goof off." So, if your child hasn't reached his potential yet, it looks like there's still time.)

After graduating from law school, both gentlemen landed prestigious fellowships. That's pretty amazing when you consider that there were only four such fellow-

ship programs nationally, each accepting approximately five participants per year. (With thousands of applicants for a scant 20 positions annually, what are the odds against two Timon grads [that we know of] making the program in the span of just a few years?)

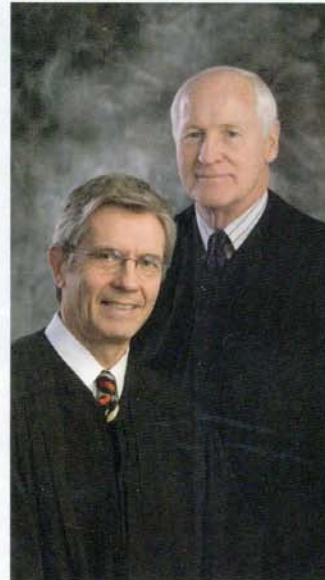
Both judges credit these fellowships as being hugely instrumental in their careers. Designed to train trial lawyers, the fellowships provided the opportunity to represent indigent defendants in critical cases. As Judge Schroeder put it, "You received about ten years' worth of trial experience in a single year."

In fact, the fellowship gave young Schroeder his first exposure to the international media spotlight. He was assigned the case of a 12-year-old boy accused of burning down the house of a friend. The friend's family came to not only forgive the troubled boy, but wanted to take him in as their own. This was complicated by the fact that the family was emigrating to Australia. And, of course, Australia had concerns about welcoming an arsonist.

Schroeder, just months out of law school, had to not only work within the U.S. justice system, but to also coordinate with social services agencies and the Australian Embassy – all while under intense international media scrutiny. Fortunately for all concerned, the relatively recent Timon grad was up to the task.

Judge Skretny's professional journey had an equally interesting start. He spent a year at the Franciscan Seminary considering a career in the priesthood. Opting instead for a secular life, Skretny eventually received a scholarship to Howard University Law School. This was a predominantly black university and, in his second year, race riots swept the city after the assassination of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In a way, Skretny experienced these times of civil rights protests from the outside in and the inside out.

Going on to earn an LLM degree at Northwestern, Skretny joined the **Chicago U.S. Attorney's Office**, home to some of the foremost litigation in the U.S. The young



Judges Skretny '67 & Schroeder '54

Skretny assisted in cases ranging from the Black Panthers to the country's first prosecution of a sitting governor.

During long, illustrious careers, both Skretny and Schroeder have witnessed substantial historic changes in our world as they worked in private practice as well as in public prosecution before being appointed to the Federal Court. Through these changes the constant has been their deep commitment to the law, their families, and their communities. Each has enjoyed a long, happy marriage and has successful, grown children in which they take great pride. Both gentlemen credit Timon and the Franciscan tradition for helping to lay the foundation that has allowed them to become what they are today.