

Full honors for Celebrezze

Bishop, judge hail ex-mayor at funeral

By JAMES F. McCARTY
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Anthony J. Celebrezze, the former mayor of Cleveland, federal judge and patriarch of a political dynasty, received a funeral befitting his accomplishments yesterday at St. John Cathedral.

Celebrezze, 88, who died Friday, was eulogized by Bishop Anthony M. Pilla for his goodness, by retired federal Judge William Thomas for his contributions to his country and by Mayor Michael R. White for his devotion to the city.

"Let us not forget that the good times we are experiencing today in Cleveland are due, in a large part, to the diligence of Anthony J. Celebrezze," White said. "No mayor and no man has loved this city more."

A veteran of 45 years of public service, Celebrezze was buried with full honors after a high requiem Mass. Many of the leading politicians in the state took leave from the rigors of the campaign trail for a couple of hours to pay tribute with prayers and hymns.

Pilla, addressing Celebrezze's wife of 60 years, Anne, assured her that the memories of dignity and grace her husband leaves behind will keep him alive in Clevelanders' hearts forever.

"No one is dead until they've been forgotten," the bishop said. "I can assure you this righteous man will never be forgotten."

Pilla recalled Celebrezze's legacy from nearly 10 years of service as mayor, citing his urban renewal plans and development of the Erievue project; he lauded Celebrezze's devotion to his family, his church and his Italian heritage; and he treasured Celebrezze's humor, kindness and charity.

"His wit kept him going. He was full of an old man's wisdom and a young man's heart, where there was no room for bigotry, hatred or prejudice," Pilla said. He addressed his closing remarks to God:

"We mourn the death of Anthony Celebrezze, but most of all we thank you for his life."

Bagpipers and a police honor guard ushered the casket and mourners into the cathedral. A single bell in the steeple overhead tolled steadily and solemnly.

Tears welled in the eyes of many of the 50 or so family members. They included Celebrezze's son, Anthony Jr., a former Ohio attorney general; his cousins, Frank, a former Ohio chief justice, James, a Cuyahoga County Common Pleas judge, and Richard Marco, a noted Medina County defense lawyer; and his



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The casket bearing Anthony J. Celebrezze is carried from St. John Cathedral on E. 9th St. in Cleveland after services there. "No one is dead until they've been forgotten," said Bishop Anthony M. Pilla at the requiem Mass, "... this righteous man will never be forgotten." Celebrezze's wife, Anne, is at the top of the church steps in a wheelchair.

nephew, Frank Celebrezze Jr., a Common Pleas judge.

During a public service career that spanned five decades, Celebrezze influenced the lives of innumerable people, many of whom recounted fond memories after

ward on the steps of the cathedral.

Gov. George V. Voinovich and State Sen. Patrick Sweeney recalled receiving their first public jobs from Celebrezze. Democratic Cuyahoga County candidate

Lee Fisher said he idolized Celebrezze, whom he clerked for as a rookie lawyer. Reps. Louis Stokes and Dennis Kucinich credited the late judge with a greatness that helped to shape the city.

OFFICIAL FUNERAL

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FUNERAL FROM 1-B

Thomas, the retired federal judge, said Celebrezze considered the passage of the Medicare bill in 1964, while he served as U.S. secretary of health, education and welfare, his greatest accomplishment.

Thomas said Celebrezze often joked that his football career at John Carroll University prepared him for a federal judgeship because "the coach kept him on the bench for so long."

The center pews were filled with hundreds of dignitaries and

officials: Police Chief Rocco Polutro led a delegation of officers in dress uniform; mayors came from surrounding cities, joined by judges, county officials and most of the members of the Cleveland City Council.

The pews along the side aisles were crowded, too, but not with politicians and public servants.

There was Tony Santoli, 53, a maintenance worker from Old Brooklyn, who grew up in the same near-East Side neighborhood as Celebrezze and whose father, a jeweler who was born in Italy, was proud to work on the

mayor's rings.

"I just came here to give him my respect," Santoli said. "He deserves it. He did a lot of stuff for Cleveland and really cleaned up the streets."

Monica Frate-DiGiando of Cleveland said she cherished the time when she worked for Celebrezze in the payroll department at City Hall.

"He always loved people and gave everybody respect," she said. "I just needed to show my respect for a great man."

Celebrezze was buried in Holy Cross Cemetery.