

Sullivan County Democrat

Online Edition

www.sc-democrat.com National Award-winning, Family-run Newspaper info@sc-democrat.com

August 22, 2000 Issue

Established 1891

Callicoon, New York

Today is Friday, November 21st, 2003

[home](#) | [subscribe](#) | [archives](#) | [community links](#) | [contact](#)

Features

- [News](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Obituaries](#)
- [Classifieds](#)
- [TV Listings](#)
- [Lottery](#)

Weather

Current Weather
for
Callicoon



Cloudy
61 F

More 

powered by
AccuWeather.com

Financial

STOCK QUOTES

Enter symbol:

 

[Lookup symbol](#)

Opinion Poll

*Our Opinion Poll
Will Return!
Thanks For Your
Patience!*

Community

["My County 'Tis of](#)

News



Democrat Photo by John Emerson

WAITING TO PAY THEIR RESPECTS: A huge line of people stand around the outside of the Lawrence H. Cooke Sullivan County Courthouse in Monticello to give tribute to Cooke, who's body lay at rest inside.

Judge Lawrence Cooke Passes Away at 85

By John Emerson

MONTICELLO — He was remembered for his many small

[Thee"](#)
[Jeryl Abramson's](#)
[Weekly](#)
[Column in the](#)
[Democrat](#)

[Sullivan County](#)
[Chamber](#)
[Of Commerce &](#)
[Industry](#)

[Sullivan County](#)
[Visitor's Association](#)

[Sullivan County](#)
[Government Center](#)

[Sullivan County](#)
[Partnership for](#)
[Economic](#)
[Development](#)

Please visit our
[Community Links](#)
 section for other
 Sullivan County
 Organizations

acts of kindness that made the recipient feel important.

He was remembered for his friendly manner and courtly bearing.

He was remembered for his mischievous wit and practical jokes.

Mostly, he was remembered as a friend by anyone who had the good fortune to meet him, even briefly.

Judge Lawrence H. Cooke, who died Thursday afternoon at his Monticello home, was remembered by hundreds and hundreds of people. Sunday, they came to the courthouse named in his honor to bid their final farewells to a man who will forever live in the hearts and minds of Sullivan County residents.

“He was a gentleman in a Panama hat,” said teary-eyed mourner Wendy McCullough. “In a way, it’s good because he’s not suffering anymore, but it’s going to be sad not to see that smile and that twinkle he always had in his eye.”

Cooke, who served as Chief Justice of the state Court of Appeals, was a giant in legal circles throughout the nation. In Sullivan County, he was known simply as “the Judge.”

“I remember the first time I met him I was doing some research in the court library,” said Supreme Court Judge Anthony Kane, a seat Cooke once held himself. “I had only been here about two months and didn’t know a soul. He was an appellate division judge at the time, and I knew who he was, but he walked over and said, ‘I wanted to introduce myself Mr. Kane, I’m Lawrence Cooke.’ He had gone out of his way to find out who I was and something about me. I went home that night and said [to my wife], ‘Nancy, you’re never going to believe what happened today.’ It is the kindnesses I’ll never forget.”

Sunday, as the Judge laid in state in the largest courtroom in the courthouse, mourners filed by the open casket to say goodbye. In his hands were the rosary beads, a symbol of his deep and abiding faith as a lifelong Catholic. There by his head sat the white, straw Panama hat that was his trademark headwear during the spring and summer months.

Throughout the afternoon, the line of mourners stretched from the second floor courtroom, down the stairs and out the rear door of the courthouse, winding its way around the corner to the front of the building along Bank Street. Hour after hour, the line never seemed to shrink as those inside finished their farewells and new people took their place at the end of the line.

Sullivan County Sheriff Dan Hogue estimated the number of people passing through the courthouse at more than 2,500 throughout the day. Through it all, in keeping with Judge Cooke's own strong but gentle personality, people on line waited quietly and patiently.

"With as many people as are here, we couldn't have asked for anything to go smoother," said Monticello Police Sgt. William Van Hague, one of the dozens of security people on duty.

The security contingent, there mostly to direct people in and out of the building and make certain that traffic flowed smoothly, consisted of officers and representatives from the State Police, Monticello Police, Sullivan County Sheriff's Department and the New York State Court Officers.

"It's a great tribute to a great man, who deserves this," said former Sheriff Joseph Wasser, who – like everyone else – waited his turn in line. "It is the least we can do for someone who has given us so much."

The final group to pay tribute to Judge Cooke Sunday evening was the firefighters from throughout Sullivan County, who conducted a traditional service for a comrade who has died. Cooke was a member of the Monticello Fire Department for 61 years and very actively involved with firematics from the time he joined until his death.

As a past president of the Hudson Valley Volunteer Firefighters' Association, Cooke checked himself out of the hospital to serve as the Grand Marshal at the annual HVVFA parade held this year in Monticello. His decision caused consternation among people at the hospital, but he refused to miss the parade and relished the company of firefighters.

Representatives from virtually every fire department in the county attended the service, which was held after the public viewing ended.

During his remarks, former Monticello Fire Department President Phil Conaty, who conducted the service, quoted from Rudyard Kipling's poem "If" and described Cooke as "a man we were all proud to call a friend."

"He was a totally honest and good person, and he will be missed," said Tony Suarez. "But he left behind his children, who are also honest and community responsible people. I met the Judge and his wife through the Catholic church, and his family is devoted to helping children and others. They are true believers in the faith. God bless them all."

[top of page](#)

[Copyright](#) © 1999-2000 Catskill-Delaware Publications.
The information you receive online from the [Sullivan County Democrat Online Edition](#) is protected by the copyright laws of the United States.
Please read our [user agreement](#) and our user information [privacy statement](#)
Internet services provided by [Green Enterprises](#)