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# Frederic Jordan Woods, Jr: His death at 47 was a surprise (1936-1983)

Morison Buck

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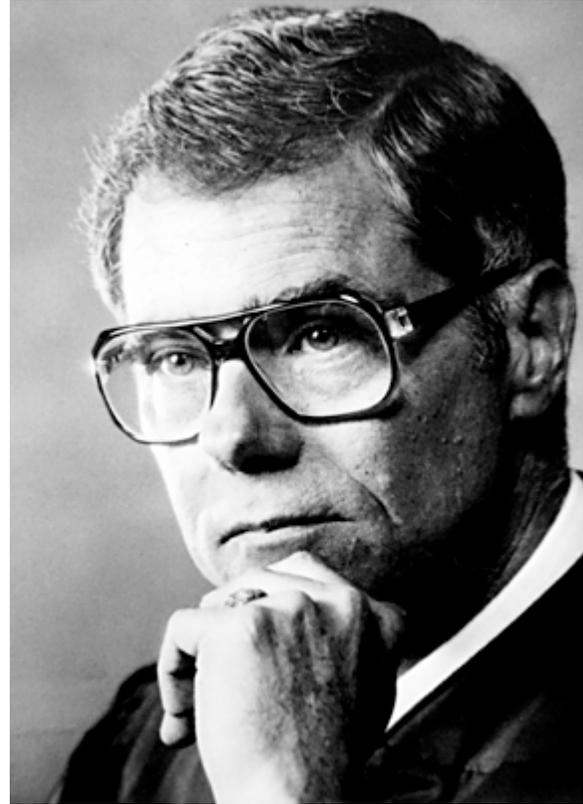
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FREDERIC JORDAN WOODS, JR.  
HIS DEATH AT 47 WAS A SURPRISE;  
(1936-1983)

HIS EXEMPLARY RECORD AS  
LAWYER AND JUDGE SHOULD NOT BE.

In 1991, Mickey Rooney published his memoirs which he called, "LIFE IS TOO SHORT," a wry reference to the author's diminutive stature.

It was the destiny of Judge Fred Woods, a man of greater than average height, about 5'11", to lead an active and successful life, but one cut short too soon. He accomplished a lot in his 47 years, but it is more than likely he would have reached greater heights had he been allowed the traditional three score and ten years or longer. Woods' life was unusual in one particular aspect, i.e. matrimony. Where most American males get through one lifetime with only one or two wives, Woods was not content with that. He walked down the aisle, so to speak, at least four times. When this writer, now classed as elderly, married his only wife on Thanksgiving Day, 1943, Fred Woods, Jr. was only 7 years old. But that's not the entire story. In January of 1978, the year his judicial career began, Judge Woods and Billie Elizabeth Dunn applied for a marriage license in Hillsborough County, according to public records. But for reasons not apparent from any public record or discoverable by this scrivener, they never secured any authority to marry in this county.



In his 1988 personal story, Mel Tormé, popular American singer and composer, the latter had this to say about the institution of marriage: "Marriage is either (a) the greatest invasion of privacy known to mankind; or (b) the sweetest taste of shared pleasures, secrets, interests, philosophies, sexual compatibility and goals imaginable. Take your pick!" from "It Wasn't All Velvet" (1988). Tormé was just an amateur compared to Tony Curtis, the Hollywood player, who was married to five different wives. Because marriage played such a significant role in the life of our subject, some later and further note will be taken of Judge Woods' experiences in that phase of his adult life, but later in the story.

In his early youth, Fred and an early friend, Mark King, were students at Roosevelt Elementary School in Tampa. Mr. King obligingly recounts his recollection of some of their boyhood adventures, and how he and Fred both wound up at Culver Military Academy in Indiana:

"I am writing about my relationship with Judge Fred J. Woods.

“I moved to Tampa in 1945 and during the first few years, my family moved on San Nicholas, which was around the corner of the Woods on Oakmont.

“I believe I met Fred J. at Roosevelt Elementary School, and spent a great deal of time after school and some weekends finding ways to behave or otherwise. Nothing very serious, but somehow Mr. Woods and my father thought otherwise. I remember around the eighth grade, Fred J. and I was called to meet with his dad and mind at the Woods one afternoon. Mr. Woods stated he had attended Culver Military Academy in Culver, Indiana. I truly believe he was thinking of making sure we were better disciplined and better schooled, as he himself remembered his days at Culver.

“Being a military academy—Fred in Company D and myself in Company A (next door building)—we managed my academic classes, athletic sports, and social events. This did make us closer friends there and in Tampa for four years. Fred J. went off to college and I to a different one, and saw each other during summertime and spent a lot of time chasing nice ladies in the Clearwater Beach area. Fred J. and myself always were very polite, and one thing I always admired about Fred J., he was very courteous. I knew Fred’s family very well and saw the etiquette which all of the Woods portrayed. Nancy Lee and her husband, Brother, kept a good eye on us at the Woods kept a beach place in the Clearwater area. Overall, I must say Fred J. never got into any serious trouble.

“Fred J. did manage to marry four times. I knew Aleene and Harrison (the one I knew best, as we see her and husband still). The third I did not know, but last wife Donna I knew, and Fred J. and her spent one of his last days at our house going over school and personal albums, which my wife and I found very nice. Shortly afterward (too short), Fred J. was struck with the dreaded cancer and passed away too early in life at 47.

“I understand Fred J. was an accomplished judge, and again, I believe he was one of the polite persons you could ever meet.

“Harrison was the wife who had Fred’s only children: Emily and Augusta (both deceased) and Fred J. III, who lives in Jacksonville with his family.

“I hope this information will help you on Fred J. I just wish there were more people like him in this world today.

“Take care and the best to you.

“Sincerely, Mark E. King.”

Woods was a child of privilege, the only child of Frederic Jordan Woods and Dorothy Wilson Woods, a prominent “old family” of Tampa who for many years lived on Oakmont on the Palma Ceia Golf Course, where father and son enjoyed many rounds of golf on that lovely course. His parents also had a daughter, Nancy Woods McKay, who was married to Herbert G. (Brother) McKay of Tampa. She died on February 9, 1997. Fred’s father was President of the St. Joseph’s Hospital Foundation, and following his death on January 22, 1971 at his home, the

Foundation paid tribute to him, copy attached (see Appendix 1). Judge Woods was also a benefactor of the Foundation. A Proclamation honoring him and his family, issued November 17, 1983 after his death, is also appended (see Appendix 2).

Judge Woods' first wife, Aleene Lebo, provides a detailed overview of her knowledge pertaining to our subject, both before and after their marriage in 1959:

"I was born in Dyersburg, Tennessee, on July 30, 1938. My parents were William and Jean Lebo. We moved to Tampa in 1952, where I attended Plant High School, graduating in 1955. I then worked in the old Trust Department of the First National Bank in Tampa—in the basement of the building—until January, when I entered Florida State University. I pledge Delta Delta Delta sorority. A girl in another sorority was engaged to Freddie Woods of Tampa; she had a very large diamond that we all talked about. I knew her slightly. I graduated in 1959 from FSU, married Fred, and then taught for two years at Plant High School. I attended FSU for graduate school and received a master's degree in English in 1963. I attended Oxford University (UK) for a summer, returned to the States, and taught at University of Wisconsin-Whitewater for two years, married Robert K. Rose, and did graduate work at Kansas University, where he received his Ph.D. in biology. We moved to Norfolk, Virginia, in 1979. I taught at Old Dominion University and was the Writing Center Director for 23 years. We have three children, four grandchildren. Our permanent home is in Norfolk, but we have lived off and on in Hobart, Tasmania, where my husband has done research since 1988.

"Fred attended Culver Military Academy for high school. He went to University of Florida for a bit, then went into the Army. I met Fred through mutual friends one hot Tampa summer. A friend, Bill Smalley, took me and another girl over to see his friend Freddie, who was sick in bed with some minor ailment. We went into his bedroom, which was over the garage. When we heard his mother coming up the stairs, the other girl and I hid under the bed. I am sure that Dot Woods knew we were there, but did not let on. He and I began dating that summer—possibly in 1958. We often spent evenings playing bridge and drinking White Horse scotch.

"We married June 9, 1959, two or three days after I graduated from college. We married at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church at 11:00 in the morning. We had a nuptial mass. The reception was at the Woods home on Oakmont Road. It was a beautiful reception. We honeymooned in Cashiers, North Carolina, and dined at High Hampton—where I saw a former boyfriend in the dining room, on HIS honeymoon. We lived on San Miguel Avenue during our three-year marriage.

"For the first year of our marriage, Fred was a student at Tampa University, majoring in business, I believe. He then worked for his father at Gulf Fertilizer. At one point, he said that he should have majored in English and taught.

"He was in the Army stationed in Germany before we married. He thoroughly enjoyed his time in Germany and returned home with a Mercedes Benz.

“Fred attended law school after we divorced. He attended FSU, as I recall.

“Fred loved cars. Soon after we married, he bought an old Cadillac to restore; it never got restored. The first summer after we were married, he bought an MG TD, which we drove until it “nickled and dimed” (his words) to death. We then bought a Triumph, which I drove; he drove his Mercedes. We went to Sebring several times, and in that first summer, with another couple, we flew down to Cuba for a sports car race and a trip to the casinos in Havana. I remember seeing young (16 years old, if that) Fidelists standing in the casinos with machine guns. We were too naïve to be frightened. Fred also liked hunting. He went several times a year.

“Fred was introduced to his second wife Harrison Flynn by my brother, Bill Lebo, who brought her to our house one night. Fred married Harrison a year or so after we were divorced. They had three children. I did not know his later wives.

“Fred and I were married for three years; in the third year we had counseling in order to try and save our marriage. We were both better for the counseling, even though the marriage ended in 1962. The divorce was granted in Hillsborough County. I then returned to FSU for graduate work. There were no children.

“Fred J. Woods, Jr. was a kind and good man. We married young, and like so many young Tampa couples during the '50s, we were very social and through that if we had two cars, a job, a dog and parties to go to, one was set for life. But we—again, like so many others—learned that real life intrudes. And intrude it did. Fred and I, in spite of the divorce, remained friendly. I was greatly saddened when he died.”

Along the way, Fred, Jr. served in the U.S. Army from May 12, 1956 to April 30, 1962. After obtaining his undergraduate degree from University of Tampa, Woods was graduated in law at Florida State University.

Attached is a narrative prepared by Richard H. (Rick) Sollner, Esq. of Trenam Kemker, a highly regarded Tampa law firm. Mr. Sollner, presently associated with the firm just named, tells that he never appeared before Judge Woods when the latter was serving on the court and likewise never observed him in court, and that his memories are more about Woods the person than the judge.

“I first met Fred Woods in September of 1967 when we were both members of the second class to attend the College of Law at Florida State University. Fred was from an old, successful and well-connected Tampa family, and left a successful insurance career in Tampa at the age of 31 to come to law school. Most of us in the class were young and poor, but Fred was older and well-off. While we lived in apartments and other rental housing, Fred and his wife, Harrison, bought a lovely three-bedroom house in a nice neighborhood where they lived with their young daughter, Emily.

“Fred liked to entertain, and I have many fond memories of the many parties he gave at his house. The law school was only one year old, and many of the professors were young,

a number of them younger than Fred. They were invited to the parties also, and several of them attended the parties regularly. It was a great way to get to know the professors, and I always felt that my law school experience was richer and fuller because of the gatherings at Fred's house.

"Fred and I and a group of 4-5 other classmates became very close friends in law school. We studied, partied and played golf together for the three years that we were together. Fred and I and a couple others in the group were on the moot court team that went to the Florida Bar Convention in Miami in 1969 to the State Moot Court competitions. After the competition our coach and faculty advisor took the team to the Playboy Club in Miami. I think that the only time I ever saw Fred at a loss for words was at the Playboy Club when he turned around in his chair to give his order to the Bunny waitress behind him, and he came face to face with the upper part of the Bunny suit of the substantially endowed young lady. He could not say "martini," all he could do was stare.

"During law school Fred remained in touch with his friends in the business community in Tampa. As a result of this, Fred got in on, and got me in on, an initial public stock offering for a new company being handled by his friends Bruce Sampson and Dave Hulse of Pierce, Wulbern and Murphy. The new stock was initially successful, and so we sold some of it and used the proceeds to finance a very enjoyable golf and sightseeing trip to High Hampton in Cashiers, North Carolina with our wives, where we were joined by the Sampsons and the Hulses. I was already talking about possibly coming to Tampa, where my wife is from, to practice, and he thought I ought to meet some Tampa people.

"Fred was also friends with a number of attorneys in Tampa, including Harry Kemker, Marvin Barkin, Les Scharf, and Bill Frye of the Trenam, Simmons, Kemker, Scharf and Barkin firm. During one Christmas break from law school while visiting my wife's parents in Tampa, Fred orchestrated a luncheon at the University Club to introduce me to these attorneys. That introduction and subsequent dinners that Harry Kemker had that he invited Fred and me and our wives to when Harry came to Tallahassee had great influence on my choice of the Trenam firm when I came to Tampa to practice.

"After law school I went to active duty in the U.S. Air Force in South Carolina to serve my four-year obligation and Fred came back to Tampa and joined the Trenam Simmons firm, but we stayed in touch. Fred and Harrison liked to collect antiques, and when they went to Savannah, Georgia in 1972 on an antiquing trip, they asked my wife and I to join them. One of the highlights of that trip was going to the antique store of a dealer named Jim Williams, an interesting character that Fred and Harrison frequently dealt with, and then going to his house, the famous Mercer House in Savannah for cocktails in the evening. The murder trial of Jim Williams in 1981 and subsequent years is documented in the book *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*.

"Fred was a longtime member of Ye Mystic Krewe of Gasparilla, and participated in all of the invasion and Krewe activities. I was fortunate enough to be his guest for the invasion and party events in 1973, and he and Harrison were wonderful host to my wife

and me. I had not known that Fred was a competent boater, but he was and we spent a nice day on the water exploring Tampa Bay.

“After leaving Trenam Simmons to handle the estate of his father, Fred was in several other legal partnerships before he was appointed to the bench. As a transactional attorney, I never had the opportunity to work with or against Fred or appear before him once he became a judge. From attorneys I have talked to, Judge Woods was respected for his intellect and judicial demeanor. He had the reputation of running a fair and efficient court, and of being respectful and fair to counsel appearing before him. I am sure that there must be a number of courtroom stories about Judge Woods, but this one was told to me by Tom Gonzales, Esquire, of Thompson, Sizemore, Gonzalez and Hearing, P.A.:

“Judge Woods prided himself on allowing extended allocutions, believing that if he was going to sentence a fellow human to jail or impose some other penalty, the subject of the sentence deserved to be heard on the matter. One day there appeared before him an obviously excited defendant who had been found guilty of a serious crime. In keeping with his practice, Judge Woods asked if the gentleman would like to speak to the court, and the offer was met with great enthusiasm. The defendant could not contain himself and began to almost shout, repeatedly, that he had many, many important things to impart to the court, matters that would certainly affect how the court viewed the case. Judge Woods tried to calm him down, assuring him that he could speak for as long as he reasonably needed, and then informing him that there were just a few conditions. All the time the Judge was speaking, the man was unrestrainable in his stated desire to speak. “You need to hear this, Judge, you need to hear this!” The Judge then went through a concise list of the strictures, each of which was met with an enthusiastic, “Yes, sir; yes, sir,” or, “I understand, your honor, I understand. I’ve got so much to tell you, so much to tell you!” The speech ended with what Judge Woods said was his most important restriction, that being his views on the exploitation of God or religion by persons about to be sentenced in a criminal court. Judge Woods explained that he considered himself a religious man, that he valued his faith, and that if there was one thing that made him mad, it was someone who found Jesus, or any other deity, when that epiphany coincided with an arrest. He resented it. He did not like it. And it would not help the speaker. He then told the defendant, “Well, sir, those are the rules and this is your time. Take as much of it as you need. What would you like to tell me?” The defendant, who had become very quiet during the last part of the Judge’s talk, stared at him for a while and simply said, “Judge, I guess I got nothing to say now.”

“Fred Woods was successful at almost everything he did. He excelled as an insurance man, a law student, a lawyer, and, ultimately, a judge. He was intelligent and witty, never staid or stiff. He was a genuine and generous friend who would do anything in his power to help any of his friends that needed help. It was a big loss to Tampa, the Bench and the Bar that he did not live longer than he did.”

In 1968 came the dedication of the Fred J. Woods Radiation Therapy Center, followed by remarks by the honoree, Fred J. Woods, and are worthy of being read and pondered; see Appendix 3.

Fred Jr. was for eight years associated with the Trenam, Simmons law firm in general practice. He later on affiliated with attorney John Turbiville, and maintained an office on W. Swann Avenue at S. Newport Avenue. At some point in his life, Woods became interested in becoming a judge, and he pursued that ambition with zest and vigor. In 1978 there was a vacancy on the Hillsborough County Court, and he contended for the opening with a Tampa lawyer whose office was in Brandon, Mike Clements. Woods was the clear winner in the pre-election poll of Hillsborough County lawyers rating the contestants on their qualifications for the office. When the dust had cleared after the election, the results were that Woods received 59.14% of the votes cast, and Clements 40.80%. Ironically, both men died in the fall of 1983.

Judge Woods was not lacking in ambition, so when a vacancy occurred in the next upward rung of the judicial ladder in 1980, Fred was fortunate in that after he announced his candidacy for the opening on the Circuit Court, he was elected without opposition, something that occurs infrequently in Hillsborough County politics.

When he was sworn in as Circuit Judge for the first and final time, Judge Woods was married to Sharon Woods. She held the Bible while standing next to her husband with his right hand raised and left hand upon the Bible.

In the interim subsequent to his first marriage, he was married to Harrison Flynn (now Mrs. Thomas Giddens of Tampa), mother of his three children. The judge's son, Fred IV, is believed to be a resident of Jacksonville, Florida, but this writer has not been able to confirm that. Sadly, the judge's two daughters, Emily Harrison Woods and Augusta Wilson Woods, died early in life. At the time of the judge's death, he was married to Donna Lewin Woods, but further details have not become available or known.

Judge Woods was assigned to the Traffic Division during his tenure of the County Judge's Court. In November 1980, the *Tampa Times* published an interesting story about the caseloads of the nine county judges on duty during that time. The article reported that the state courts administrator in Tallahassee confirmed that in 1979 Hillsborough County judges disposed of 20,215 cases per judge, the largest number in the state of Florida. Judge Woods was quoted as saying, "We didn't make a request (for additional judges) and we realize that we made a mistake." Judge Ralph Steinberg is now serving as a senior judge, having retired from Circuit Court previously. Judge Steinberg's comments pertaining to Judge Woods are as follows:

"My first knowledge of Judge Woods was in 1977. His name was sent to Gov. Reubin Askew along with Don Belveal's and mine by the 13th Judicial Circuit Nominating Commission for the selection of one of us for appointment to a newly created position as judge of court. Although I was selected approximately one year later, Judge Woods was elected to a vacancy in County Court.

“We both served in the Traffic Division of County Court, which was then housed at the old City of Tampa police station on Tampa Street. It was there that I really got to know Judge Woods. I found him to be very a personable, compassionate and intelligent judge. He had been a volunteer auxiliary police officer and enjoyed his assignment to the Traffic Division of the Court. He made himself readily available to law enforcement for issuance of arrest and search warrants, as well as for probable cause determinations when needed.

“Judge Woods ascended to Circuit Court before I did, in 1980, and our communications therefore diminished. He was assigned to the Criminal Justice Division, and I was assigned to the newly created Family Law Division.

“I was very fond of Judge Woods, and considered him a friend. His death at a young age was a tragedy. I respected his knowledge of the law and even temperament.”

Ralph Steinberg

Remarks about Judge Fred Woods from people “in the know” about his significant contributions to the Hillsborough County Court System during his brief tenure:

“Fred seemed to know everybody who was anybody in Tampa. He not only knew the contemporaries of all the mover-and-shaker families but their family histories, and could regale us with stories, some positive, some negative, but all interesting and/or funny. Fred had a droll sense of humor and so was a great storyteller. And what a friendly guy he was! From talking to him, I gleaned that he had become a judge for pretty much the same reason I became a prosecutor and judge—he found private practice to be mostly meaningless and unimportant and he wanted to do something that was neither of those things. Lord knows, he didn’t need the job!”

J. Rogers Padgett  
Senior Judge

“I appeared before Judge Woods on two or three occasions, and found him to be knowledgeable of the law with a good judicial temperament. He also had an excellent sense of humor—all great attributes to be a judge.”

Thomas F. Granahan  
Board Certified Trial Lawyer

“He was a very nice man, very intelligent, and had a good way with people. It is a pity that he didn’t live a longer life.”

Marvin E. Barkin  
Trenam, Kemker Law Firm

“Fred was a fellow who always had an open door and a great love for the outdoors. We passed many an hour hunting and fishing and the like. I recall stories of his days on his beloved sailboat and the fish he caught at Boca Grande, a place both he and I loved. I have one of his favorite shotguns he sold me at quite an attractive price. I hold dear. It is a Winchester model 12 pump gun. Perfect for quail. Fred was quite a sportsman.

“Fred lingered in his last days at his apartment home in the memorable Mirasol on Davis Islands. I recall visiting with him. His time on the bench was much too short. He was fair-minded at all times and the personification of a judge for all people, never harsh or bent to offhand remarks. He respected those who came before him, no matter their plight. I do wish he were with us today.”

Norman Cannells, of counsel to  
Rywant, Alvarez, Jones, Russo & Guyton

“My first personal experience of Fred Woods was when I ran for Circuit Judge and Fred ran for County Judge. Both of us were elevated by the enlightened but confused electorate. Bless 'em all! I was ignorant of many of the rules, regulations and mores of the politics of our great county. I made a decision at the last minute and filed on the last day, and my education in campaigning began. My impression of candidate-lawyer Fred Woods was that he had spent the necessary time and effort to know about the popular spots and the real players. Somehow I learned that Fred had been a volunteer uniformed sheriff's deputy and rode in the cruisers at night and carried one or more guns. Fred was a friend of now-retired Circuit Judge Roland Gonzalez, who was then serving in Plant City on the County Court bench. Judge Gonzalez' judicial assistant Cookie wanted to attend court—the sounding of the criminal docket with Judge Gonzalez presiding—so the latter asked Fred Woods to sit next to Cookie, but then Roland was concerned about the weapon in Woods' holster. Whereupon, Woods remarked to Candidate Pope, ‘Don't worry, it's not loaded; when the culprit grabs for the one on my hip, I'll get him with the gun in my ankle holster. And it *is* loaded.’”

Calvin A. Pope  
Former Circuit Judge

Many people ardently believe in the reliability of zodiac signs and how they purportedly reveal personality traits and characteristics of persons born under a particular sign. Judge Fred Woods' date of birth was November 10, 1936, which places him under the sign of Scorpio. To believers in astrology, Scorpions are fiercely independent with strong traits of loyalty and resourcefulness, and they are said to be a dynamic personality. Those who knew Fred Woods well, unlike this scribe who does not remember ever meeting him personally, he possessed the foregoing qualities in large measure.

Judge Woods had a number of “headline grabbing” cases during his relatively brief tenure as felony court judge in Hillsborough County. One of the more extraordinary trials he presided over was *State v. Willie (Peewee) Jacobs*, an 18-year-old black man who was charged with first degree murder. Significantly, it was the very first capital case before Judge Woods. It was alleged that the defendant had bludgeoned the victim (a white male) over the head with a pipe or metal bar, robbed him of money in his possession, then dumped his body into the water off Kennedy Blvd. Bridge. There was one alleged eyewitness to the crime. The lawyer defending Jacobs was Bruce Cury, then serving as Chief Assistant Public Defender. At trial, the medical examiner testified there was no evidence that the dead man had been clubbed on the head. The alleged eyewitness testified that she had seen the deceased earlier in the evening at Ki-Ki-Ki Lounge flashing a wad of cash. The forenamed bar was reportedly a hangout for gay men. There was also testimony that the victim was not gay and did not frequent gay bars.

At the conclusion of all the evidence, Judge Woods preempted the jury from deciding the case when he granted a defense motion for acquittal. According to lawyer Cury, the granting of a motion for acquittal in the case was an extraordinarily courageous action by a trial judge in a capital case.

Slightly more than a year after the Saffold verdict (more about that case in a moment), anyone present at the final public appearance of Honorable Fred J. Woods, Jr. at St. John's Episcopal Church in Tampa would have heard the now-deceased lawyer, Tom MacDonald, attired in canonical robes, praising the much-loved young jurist who died in November, 1983. Judge Woods, said MacDonald, had a way of disposing of cases before him, which was a courageous rendition of justice. "It was a trait of his, doing what he thought was right in the face of what would result in adverse public opinion."

*State v. Charles William Saffold* was a particularly egregious case. The accused was a presentable-looking 27-year-old guy. In September, 1982, he was tried and found guilty of two counts of rape, armed burglary, kidnapping, and aggravated assault. He was also charged with first degree murder of one of the women sexually assaulted in August of 1980. Woods sentenced Saffold to the maximum of four life terms plus five years. The sentence was structured so that Saffold, an escapee from a Maryland prison at the time of the aforesaid multiple offenses, would not be eligible for parole without the judge's permission for 200 years. One fascinating aspect of the case occurred when the prosecutor, Mark Ober (now State Attorney for Hillsborough County), inquired of Saffold if he had ever been inside the mobile home where his crimes were committed. Saffold invoked the Fifth Amendment and declined to answer five times during the examination. His lawyer said later that the guilty verdict was a matter of routine after Saffold chose to invoke his privilege against self-incrimination.

In *State v. Jeffrey Alan Castleberry* (1982) in a jury trial before Woods, defense attorney Brian Donerly (now deceased), in his capacity as Assistant Public Defender, conceded that his client had slain Kathleen Valentine in a Mango, Florida trailer park on February 28, 1981, but argued that he should be found not guilty because of temporary insanity. His argument was that, beginning in the mid-1970s, his client indulged in "gasoline huffing." After four hours of deliberation, the jury found him guilty of first degree murder, but elected not to impose the death penalty. Although the prosecutor forcefully argued that the defendant, despite being subject to the influence of the gas huffing, marijuana and other drugs, was conscious of the difference between right and wrong and was eligible for the electric chair, Woods accepted the jury's unanimous recommendation and gave the 19-year-old killer life imprisonment.

Fred J. Woods, Jr. was a well-trained lawyer who became an unusually competent and respected judge: a clean-cut and good looking young man whose early death prevented fulfillment of a full-blown judicial career which had been predicted and expected by all who admired him. Photos of Judge Woods in his "working clothes" seen by this alleged writer usually showed him in dark, rimmed eyeglasses with a somberly, serious mien in sharp contrast to a man known to have gregarious good humor who was at home in a social setting with a modest portion of spirits at a side table.

Reference to his loyalty to others is perhaps best demonstrated in the attached letter from Judge Woods to then Chief Judge Robert W. Rawlins, Jr. written in early 1981, in which he promoted an increase in salary for his judicial assistant Tasha Smythe (see Appendix 4).

Morison Buck

Appendix 1: Resolution of Directors of St. Joseph's Hospital Honoring Fred J. Woods

“WHEREAS, on January 22, 1971, our Heavenly Father has called to his side a valued and respected friend, Frederic J. Woods; and

WHEREAS the strength, inspiration and direction given by Mr. Woods will long be remembered by persons of all stations, in widespread locales whose paths he crossed, both directly and indirectly; and

WHEREAS God has blessed our community with the presence and good works of this active, gentle man and distinguished citizen; and

WHEREAS, few men, indeed, are able to leave such an example of Christian family life and civic responsibility. His loss is irreplaceable to this community he loved and supported so generously; and

WHEREAS his fine family, his substantial contribution to the state, the development of business, educational and health care projects will serve as a living memorial to his tireless and gracious efforts: Therefore be it

RESOLVED, by the Board of Directors of St. Joseph's Hospital, Inc., assembled this twelfth day of February, 1971, that we extend our sympathy and share with his family, the sadness of the death of this good man; and be it

RESOLVED, that they may draw comfort in the confidence that God has called their beloved husband and father to a special place of honor, as we will honor his memory in our hearts and prayers; and be it

RESOLVED further, that a copy of this resolution be spread upon the minutes of this meeting and a copy hereof forwarded to his wife and family.”

Signed by Directors of St. Joseph's Hospital

on Feb. 12, 1971

Appendix 2:

PROCLAMATION

Whereas: Frederic Jordan Woods, Jr. has been a friend and benefactor of St. Joseph's Hospital; and

Whereas: Frederic Jordan Woods, Jr. served the Hospital as President of its Foundation from January 1974 to January 1979; and

Whereas: His presence shall be missed by the many people whose lives he has touched in the course of his own life; and

Whereas: The Woods family has supported the health care mission of the Franciscan Sisters at St. Joseph's Hospital through personal devotion in addition to other substantial contributions.

Now, Therefore Be it known that the Board of Trustees of St. Joseph's Hospital wishes to express its deep sorrow at the untimely passing of Frederic Jordan Woods, Jr., and be it known that The Board has been joined in these expressions of regard by all the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany.

Date: November 17, 1983

BY: Sr. Marie Celeste Sullivan (signed)  
President

BY: James M. Kelly (signed)  
Chairman, Board of Trustees

Appendix 3:

Remarks by Fred J. Woods

December 12, 1968

At a dinner celebrating the completion of the fundraising and the naming of the Fred J. Woods Radiation Therapy Center at St. Joseph's Hospital, Tampa, Florida.

The Sisters of Saint Francis, Mr. Toland, members of the foundation and friends of St. Joseph's. I am overwhelmed by this, the greatest honor that has been or will be bestowed on me. I thank all of you.

I seldom have a captive audience, so I hope you will indulge me a few minutes. In my efforts to solicit contributions for the radiation center I frequently had an unrecognized and unsuspecting audience, for I am one of the many who take their frustrations as well as pleasures home with them from work. I told my wife, Dot, that even though I had not been very effective in convincing others, I believed in the benefits of the radiation center to mankind and this area was going to have it—and have it paid for—even though no government funds were available.

Without my knowledge, she conferred with our children, Nancy Lee McKay and Fred Jr., and they, joined by their spouses, enthusiastically urged me to contribute substantially of my worldly goods that in the normal course of events would have been in their inheritance. To my wife and children I will be forever grateful for their understanding. Those of us who have been blessed by the good Lord with success have a responsibility to our wives and children, to provide for their health, education, comfort and welfare to the best of our ability. But when the fruits of our blessings and labors exceed reasonable requirements to meet their needs, we must not shirk our responsibilities to our fellow man. Become involved, study the needs of churches, hospitals, universities and other organizations dedicated to the betterment of mankind, lend them your proven talents and, when you are convinced of the soundness of their programs, help them reach their goals. Large contributions can be made—of which the tax collector will pay the larger share—and *you* will have the pleasure of seeing the benefits that will flow from your generosity. Don't leave the responsibility to your heirs, it is yours. Substantial wealth placed in inexperienced and untrained hands is often a gross injustice, adversely affecting the lives of

those you love the most. If, when I am gone, one small voice says this is a better world for my having passed through it, my life has been a success.

Fred J. Woods (Sr.)

Appendix 4: Letter from Fred J. Woods to Robert W. Rawlins, Jr.

February 3, 1981

The Honorable Robert W. Rawlins, Jr.  
Chief Judge  
Thirteenth Judicial Circuit

Re: Tasha A. Smythe

Dear Judge Rawlins:

In 1978 when I came on the bench, I petitioned to Judge Spoto and was successful in acquiring a reasonable raise in salary for Tasha because of her outstanding qualifications. Having assumed a new position, I feel it incumbent upon myself to do so again in that I believe that she certainly deserves more than starting pay in her profession.

Tasha has now been with me since 1975, and in my solo practice of law she served as legal assistant, research assistant, office manager and executive secretary. Her skills are excellent and her experience and ability are extremely broad and deep. As mentioned in the Judicial Administrative Commission portion of the 1980 Florida Judicial College Manual, Tasha types extremely accurately and rapidly and can take dictation and transcribe it as fast as you can talk. She discharged her duties in traffic court, which are the most severe of any judicial secretary with cheerfulness and aplomb, handling a disenchanted general public efficiently and pleasantly. In addition, she graduated number one in her class as a paralegal from Hillsborough Community College in 1978.

Accordingly, please consider this an official request to raise her gross monthly salary, within the guidelines set by the Judicial Administrative Commission, to \$1150.00 per month.

I will greatly appreciate your cooperation in this matter as we are fortunate to have personnel of her caliber and I do not desire to lose her to the private sector.

kindest personal regards,  
Fred J. Woods, Jr. (signed)

AFTERWORD:

For us, the winds do blow,  
The earth doth rest, heaven moves  
And fountains flow;  
Nothing we see but means our good,  
As our delight, or as our treasure.  
The whole is either our cupboard of  
Food, or cabinet of pleasure.

EMERSON