



WHAT HONOR IS ALL ABOUT!

Quickly, who said "it's better to build a dynasty of public service than a dynasty of wealth" and really believed that? His 45 years of public service ended earlier this year!

Again quickly, who tossed out the first pitch nine times at the Cleveland Indians openers at Municipal Stadium?

Finally, who has a downtown skyscraper named after him.?

The answers are identified a man who was raised in a near downtown neighborhood on Scovill Avenue near E. 29th Street. As a 2 year old child, his parents, Rocco and Dorothy brought him to Cleveland from Anzi, Italy. Eventually, the entire clan including 10 children were jammed into five rooms plus a hot and humid attic. (Before air conditioning and ceiling fans)

While his father, Rocco was "scratching" for pennies patrolling the railroad yards, he was patrolling Central Market to find enough broken produce crates to bring home to warm up the house during winter time. In his "better times" he was shining shoes and hustling newspapers at E. 9th and Prospect Avenue. In those days, a good day would net him 30 cents. As a teenager, he made a few extra bucks punching "out the lights" of fellow amateur boxers. At old Central High, he got some decent grades but no where close to class valedictorian, Ann Marco, his bride of 56 years.

Fresh out of high school he became involved in the grass roots campaign of a local legendary politician, county prosecutor Ray T. Miller. Over the years, Miller "called the shots" in Cuyahoga County. When he had enough dollars, the young man attended Ohio Northern University and in his final year, 1936 scrubbed floors to get through law school.

With that earlier "taste" of politics with Miller years earlier, the Ohio Northern law graduate turned to the Ohio Senate and won a vacant Democrat seat in 1950 and repeated two years later. When Mayor Thomas Burke decided he was leaving City Hall, his brother Frank organized a draft movement that would buck head on the local party, its chairman Ray T. Miller and the endorsed candidate, county engineer Albert "Bert" Porter. With a key aide, Joseph Ventura at his side and friends like John Locuoco, the candidate carried the message, "he couldn't be bought and no one controlled him."

The political strategy paid off and he came into City Hall telling workers, he wanted "forty hours work for forty hours pay." He became everyday front page news in the dailies as he battled the party and the "big man with the cowboy hat", Council President Jack Russell. Those early battle days were smoothed over as Russell learned the Italian ran City Hall.

The little man with thinning hair and mustache won five consecutive two year terms. Sandwiched in (1958) was his only election defeat..that to Mike DiSalle of Toledo in the Democratic Primary for Governor.

About a year after he turned down a federal judgeship, JULY 1962, he was off on a fishing trip when he received a phone message to call his office. Walleye came first then picking up the message to call the White House and that he did from a public phone. It was the president calling, John F. Kennedy and he was looking for "the right guy for the right job." He offered the 5 foot six man the post of Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare. A week



later, he was in the Rose Garden at the White House with his wife Anne and relatives. After the assassination of President Kennedy, he stayed on with the Lyndon Johnson administration. Criticized for courting obscurity for his lack of media availability, he prevailed in his own way and style.

This man was a major player in the cabinet. He played a major role in more than a dozen Congressional bills. Those bills brought Americans a Civil Rights Act, Medicare, Cigarette Labeling Act and a Water Pollution Control and Clean Air Act. Johnson would be heard to say that this Italian, "was one of the most underestimated in Washington. "Just because he was a small person born in Italy, people didn't take him serious. Without him, some of these bills would not have made it through Congress."

During Johnson's presidency he decided that he would like a federal judgeship and despite Johnson's reluctance to see the "little guy" leave the HEW, he shook hands on the judgeship. After all, Johnson at one time considered this little guy for the number 2 slot on the 1964 ticket. One oversight on the part of the White House. This potential veep

was born in Italy.

And for 30 years or so, he served as a judge on the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals based in Cincinnati. This past Spring, he said "arriverderci" to 45 years of public service.

This record was established by a humble, non pretentious man who though little in size became a "giant" in government service. A man whose own father endured being turned down for jobs because he was Italian. This man truly believed in "la famiglia" and God. In his public career, he was the antithesis of the stereotypical politician.

What legacy will he leave? It only takes a look at downtown Cleveland. The skyscrapers of Erievue, the port of Cleveland, Burke Lakefront Airport and the rapid transit system. He was there on Lakeside Avenue making sure Cleveland and its people lived in the Best Location in the Nation. All it took was serving the people's interests.

That man, that statesman....Mr. ANTHONY J. CELEBREZZE. His only boss...the people of Cleveland and the people of the United States.

COWEN

H TYRONE HUNT
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT
PRIVATE CLIENT GROUP

COWEN & COMPANY
ONE CLEVELAND CENTER
1375 EAST 9TH STREET,
CLEVELAND, OH 44114
TEL (216) 621-8500
OHIO 800 221-4960
NATIONAL (800) 321-3861

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