Miner Installed Circuit Judge Might Go To Supreme Court

By ANNABAR JENSIUS

ALBANY - Roger J. Miner of Hudson was sworn in Saturday as Circuit Judge for the U.S. Court of Appeals, an honor made sweeter by a number of references that this prestigious court may not be the last rung of his career.

Sen. Alfonse D’Amato and other speakers made it clear that Miner would be a prime candidate for an opening on the Supreme Court as well.

More than 500 friends and well-wishers, including a number of attorneys, judges, federal and state officials and other luminaries, jammed into the courtroom at the Federal Court House in Albany at noon Saturday for the ceremony, culminating in Miner’s taking the oath of office from his father, Hudson attorney Abram Miner, as his wife, Jacqueline, proudly looked on.

Mrs. Miner is the former Jacqueline Mariann Car- michael of Kiskatom.


The welcome was given by the Hon. James L. Oakes, Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals, second circuit, who noted this was a “happy occasion” and an extraordinary session. Miner is the 53rd appointee in 116 years, Judge Oakes noted. “We expect him to play error-free ball on his new team, remembering that the Supreme Court is not final because it is infallible, but is infallible because it is final.” He noted that Miner’s wife Jacqueline and sons Lawrence, Mark, Ralph and Ronald were all in attendance, and that Miner is the first judge to reach the Court of Appeals from Hudson, “the most scenic location, most colorful bench and most interesting cases in the district.”

Also speaking was the Hon. Howard G. Munson, Chief Judge of the U.S. District Court, who said “He has done an excellent job and it will be sad to see him go.”

Ralph I. Lancaster Jr., President of the American Bar Association and a member of the Standing Committee of the Federal Judiciary, noted that Miner is eminently qualified for the post and was chosen after rigorous screening by his committee which conducted extensive interviews with judges and attorneys, noting that Miner’s “competence, integrity and temperament are past reproach.”

Justin L. Vigdor, President of the New York State Bar Ass’n, noted that Miner is the first Second District judge to be seated from Albany. Also speaking was Supreme Court Justice Leonard Weiss, who recalled a veritable “cauldron of adversity” when both he and Miner were assigned to posts in New York City during the subway strike and were hard-pressed to find a suitable place to eat each evening with a slim meal allowance. “That was when we both vowed to improve our careers,” he said drily.

Judge James T. Foley, senior Judge for the U.S. District Court, who was appointed by President Truman in 1949, also said that the ceremony would be one of the most memorable in his long judicial career. “One of our own has been appointed to the prestigious U.S. Court of Appeals,” he said, “He is excellent and well qualified.”

Cong. Hamilton Fish Jr. of Millbrook, whose district formerly encompassed both Greene and Columbia County, a long-time friend of the Miners, cited the judge’s “great personal integrity. He has served with distinction,” he said. “He treats each litigant as if his case were the most important. He is independent, but not insensitive.”

Cong. Gerald B. Solomon said he was proud to testify before the Judicial Committee on Miner’s behalf. “He has always been true to his roots in Columbia County,” he said, “true to his community and to his high ideals. He had three inspirations: his grandfather, who arrived a penniless immigrant on the streets of New York; his family and especially his wife, Jackie and his nation and its system of laws which rewards excellence. This may not be his final job,” he said.

Final speaker was Sen. Alfonse D’Amato who said the turnout was not only a tribute to the Judge but because “no one wants Jackie Miner to be annoyed.” But he added that the number of dignitaries was a tribute “to the deep respect felt for Roger Miner.”

After taking his oath, Miner ascended to the bench in his robe and spoke briefly. He pledged his loyalty and esteem to his colleagues, adorning with a twinkle, “But I reserve the right to dissent!”

He said “it is a great honor to share a seat on this court.” He also praised his wife Jackie as “a woman of formidable talents, having pursued several careers,” and noted that he was actually the second appointee to the bench from Albany Law School, the first being John L. Harlan “and you all remember what happened to him!”

Miner promised to face each case “with an open mind and a sense of fairness and impartiality, a desire to do justice and use all the skills I can bring to bear.”

Following the ceremony Rabbi Philip Schlenker of Catskill gave the Prayer for our Country and Mrs. Vera Resigno, an aunt of Mrs. Miner’s, sang “America the Beautiful,” after which all of the guests joined in singing “God Bless America.” Guests were then escorted out in orderly fashion by federal marshals and greeted the Miner family in the judge’s chambers, also enjoying fellowship and feasting in the corridors.