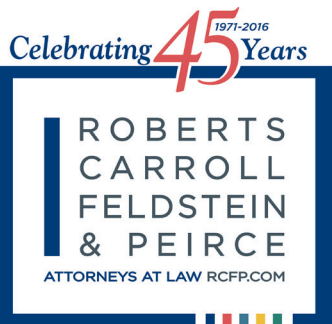


“No one can quote something you didn’t say”:
A dedication to Governor Roberts in honor of RCFP’s 45th Anniversary



A humble man, with exemplary communication skills, Governor Roberts was born on April 8, 1903, in Providence, RI. Roberts attended LaSalle Academy, Fordham University and Boston University School of Law. Following his graduation from law school in 1930, Roberts returned to Rhode Island and entered private practice.

In 1934 or 1935, Roberts and his brother—who would later become Supreme Court Justice Thomas Roberts—were invited to a meeting to discuss an open seat in the Rhode Island Senate. The brothers were offered the spot and, by way of a coin toss, it was decided that Roberts would run (Justice Thomas Roberts would later describe this as the luckiest coin toss of his life).

Roberts won the election and, taking his seat in the Rhode Island State Senate in 1935, began a long and distinguished career in public service. He served in the Rhode Island State Senate from 1935 to 1939. In 1940, Roberts was elected Mayor of Providence, holding the position until 1951. Roberts also served in the United States Navy during World War II. He was discharged with the rank of Lieutenant Commander.

In 1950, Roberts won the Rhode Island gubernatorial election. He was sworn in as Governor on January 2, 1951. He won three re-election campaigns and served four two-year terms between 1951 and 1959. In 1958, Governor Roberts was defeated by a Republican challenger, Christopher Del Sesto.

Subsequently, in 1960, Governor Roberts sought the Democratic nomination for the United States Senate, losing to Clairborne Pell. In 1964, Governor Roberts became Chairman of the Rhode Island Constitutional Convention.

As a long time member of the Democratic Party, Governor Roberts became Chairman of the State Democratic Party in 1938. Governor Roberts attended the 1936, 1940, 1948 and 1960 Democratic National Conventions as a delegate and, al-

though he would never mention it, was on good terms with Presidents Truman and Kennedy.

As was typical of Governor Roberts, he did not talk about his greatest political achievements in later life. Instead, he expressed his regret that he was not in the Governor’s office for longer; explaining that he had hoped to do more to improve the health and well-being of Rhode Islanders, especially their nutrition.

Within RCFP, “The Governor”—as he was affectionately known—was a constant affirmative presence. Described as a “quiet administrator” who “generated among his colleagues a need and desire to do their best,” The Governor had an open door policy, and was always willing and able to guide—generously sharing his wisdom. Those who sought his advice inevitably left his office with bolstered confidence and a real sense of purpose.

Ironically for a man who stated that “no one can quote something you didn’t say,” but fortunately for those who were not lucky enough to have met him, The Governor’s aphorisms are regularly quoted and used as teaching tools at RCFP. These tools remain as important to the philosophy of RCFP as they were when they were first uttered.

“All client problems are difficult, if our clients didn’t have difficult problems they wouldn’t need our help.” The Governor always put his clients first. No matter what the issue, question or concern, if a client was asking, it was a priority.

“Do what it takes to get it done.” As part of his client-centered approach, The Governor knew it was important to hire talented people and that it was equally important to let them use their talents. Rather than telling people what to do, The Governor exhorted a collaborative, thoughtful process,

believing that this process would lead to the best results for his clients. He gave his best and expected everyone to do the same.

“We don’t recognize barriers.” The Governor did not deal in obstacles or barriers, but focused on solutions and achieving the results his clients desired.

When faced with a large and complex task, with no clear beginning or end, The Governor’s advice was always to **“start.”** He noted that **“difficult tasks or situations were always best addressed in the morning.”** The Governor did not shy away from what was hard and expected his colleagues to tackle difficult and complex questions head on.

These statements continue to be the benchmark and guide at RCFP.

This bulletin is provided for informational purposes only, as a service to our loyal clients. It should not be construed as legal advice, and is not a substitute for the advice of a qualified attorney familiar with your particular situation. For advice about your situation, please contact an attorney from RCFP.

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