

Toward the end of his third year of law school at Marquette, James E. Duffy, Jr., responded to a yellow-card notice on the Marquette Law School bulletin board. “The Honolulu law firm of Cobb & Gould was looking for an associate,” he recalled. “I was hoping to live out west after law school as I had worked at Glacier National Park in Montana during my college summers and loved it . . . Hawaii was just farther west than I had envisioned!” But a salary of more than Duffy ever imagined (\$750/month) drew him to Hawaii. Early on, he had an opportunity to try cases, several against a firm headed by Hawaii’s generally acknowledged finest trial lawyer—Wally Fujiyama. “He took a liking to me, offered me a job, and became my mentor, friend, and law partner for the next 25 years until his death. My relationship with him was the best thing that could have happened to me professionally. He was a great teacher, and together we tried every kind of civil case there is, for both plaintiffs and defendants, and some criminal cases for good measure!”

Last year, Justice Duffy was appointed to the Hawaii Supreme Court, and in June 2003 was sworn in. “I love my job,” says Justice Duffy. “It gives me the opportunity to continue learning about the law and use the practical knowledge and common sense I have learned throughout the past 35 years of practicing law.” He gives credit and thanks to Marquette Law School and its faculty for his professional success. “From the first day of law school, the emphasis was on what it means to be a professional and what a professional owes to one’s clients, the profession and the judicial system, the community, and him/herself,” he said. “Marquette taught me the importance of integrity, values, and ethics in the practice of law and the need to live my life—both professionally and personally—as a whole person.” Another life lesson that made a significant impact on Justice Duffy was the Law School’s commitment to the need for humanity and sensitivity toward the client. “Throughout my education, it was consistently stressed that clients are people, not just a file with a legal problem.”

Many memories flood Justice Duffy’s recollections, but chief among them is the first day of torts class. He recalls Professor Ghiardi saying, “*I will be here on time every day, and I will be prepared. You will also be here on time every day, and you will also be prepared.*” Duffy, who graduated in 1968, recalls: “He was, and we were!” Little did he know at the time

that this same foreboding professor would one day be his father-in-law! Jim married Jeanne Ghiardi and together they have two daughters.

Justice Duffy is an avid horseman, raising and riding quarterhorses in events of cutting, team penning, and sorting. He does find time for his passion, carefully balancing all aspects of his busy life. “Over the years, I’ve learned the importance of keeping a balance in my life with family and friends, having a spiritual life, and keeping physically fit.” Keeping with his own philosophy, he hopes to work at the court as long as he is able and ride his horses as often as possible. •

Joining Justice Duffy (far right) for a trail ride in Hawaii this February were United States Marshal Dutch Hanohano (left) and United States Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg (center).



Hon. James E. Duffy, Jr., L'68
Supreme Court of Hawaii



Photo by Carol Stevens