



Judge Angelo Tona

In 1939, retired New York City Criminal Court Judge Angelo Tona lived on Efner Street in Buffalo, New York. He barely spoke English. "Me am Angelo," he said by way of introduction to Miss Shaw, his kindergarten teacher at P S 73.

Shortly thereafter Angelo's parents and their nine children moved to Seventh Street. Angelo became an altar boy at Holy Cross Church and dreamt of the priesthood. To pursue that dream he attended The Little Flower Seminary in Williamsville. But while ushering at Shea's Niagara Theater he discovered girls and the dream ended. Of this he informed the authorities. They applauded his integrity and he transferred to Holy Angels Collegiate Institute; soon to be Bishop Fallon high school.

After graduating he served in the U S Navy for eighteen months. He was injured and received a medical discharge. He came home, enrolled in Canisius College and bartended at Victor Hugo's and Club 31, watering holes for medical doctors and high profile lawyers. In that sphere of influence he acquired a love for Law. As such he applied to Fordham law School and was accepted. Though Fordham was in The Bronx Angelo lived modestly in Brooklyn and supported himself by tending bar at

Rice and Ketchup
by Joey Giambra

(Life in Brooklyn with
The Judge, the Actor
and the Felon)

the Bossert Hotel on Montague Street.

He graduated from Fordham School of Law, Evening Division in 1962 and worked as a claims examiner for Geico Insurance in Brooklyn night court. In the summer of 1962, while studying for the Bar, Angelo received a phone call from a kindergarten colleague who said he was in New York to further an acting career, one that began in Buffalo. He also said he had "very little money" and could he stay with Angelo for a "few days."

Angelo picked up his friend. The next day he gave him subway fare to NYC: an act Angelo repeated for days hoping the actor could find an agent.

The actor seized upon his friend's benevolence. Those "few days" became six months. The actor brought every starving New York thespian he met to Angelo's and collectively they ate him out of house and home.

After a tedious evening in Brooklyn night court for Geico a hungry Angelo entered his apartment building eager to devour a lone center-cut pork chop: the last morsel in his once abundant refrigerated food supply. Nearing his apartment the sound of Stan Getz playing Too Marvelous For Words and the smell of fried pork filled the air. He opened the door to see a young man, a stranger, fiendishly sucking on the bone of HIS pork chop while wearing one of HIS shirts. The actor explained that the man, a friend from Buffalo somehow knew that he was staying with Angelo. He said the man jumped bail in Buffalo and was sleeping on park benches