

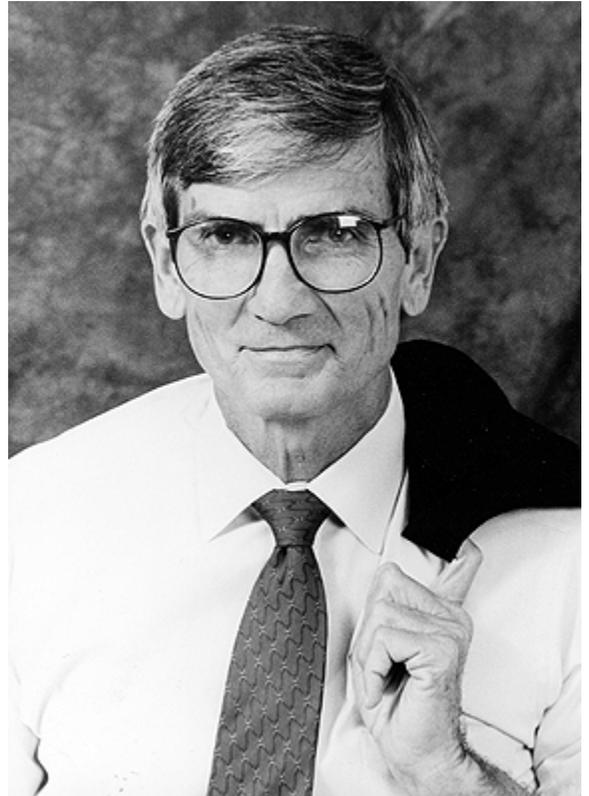
*Chips off the Old Bench—One of a Series*

**Harry Lee Coe, III**: (1932—2000)

Sinistral *Au Naturel* Athlete in the Judiciary (And Then Some)

It was just another seasonable hot July day in Tampa. But the local daily newspapers, *The Tampa Tribune* and *St. Petersburg Times* the morning of July 14, 2000 headlined news which brought a chill to the air: Hillsborough County State Attorney Harry Lee Coe III was dead of a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the left temple. The life of a well-known, successful, and popular (with most people) figure whose public life spanned three decades was over; But questions remained: Why would a man in seemingly robust health at 68 whose political future appeared secure sacrifice his life? What private demons he

internalized create such despair and desperation that his *raison d'être* ceased to exist for this talented but troubled man? In the course of this story about his life and career, some answers to the unexpected public death of this intensely private person (who was still addressed as “Judge Coe” although his judicial service had ended eight years prior to his death) may emerge. Nevertheless, Harry Coe’s subscription to life, sadly, expired on that fateful day.



At 86, funnyman Henny Youngman wrote a memoir of his years in show business. Details of an individual's place and date of birth, in Youngman's view, are superfluous and of no interest to anyone interested in that person's history. He did nonetheless disclose that he was born in London in 1905, and that he grew up in Brooklyn, N.Y. where he developed a comedy style of pattern, which made him a star of the borscht belt and as Brooklyn as Pee Wee Reese and Nathan's Coney Island hot dogs. Youngman died in New York City in 1998.

Life, according to perhaps a solid majority of contemporary biophysicists, begins at birth. The United States Supreme Court also thought so when it decided the controversial case of Roe v. Wade. Hence, what might be called the Harry Lee Coe story begins with his birth in, of all places, Brooklyn, on February 13, 1932, the first-born child of Harry Lee Coe, Jr. and Marjorie Frost Coe.

The Coe clan originally settled in Lebanon, Tennessee, just a few miles east of Nashville. Harry's sister and only sibling, Florence Coe Futch of Plantation, Florida has some reflections concerning their ancestors:

“Politics and public service runs through the Coe blood. Our grandfather, Harry Lee Coe, Sr. was an attorney in Lebanon before moving the family to Florida. He was the Clerk of the Circuit, and became the first mayor when Lebanon became a city. Our father, Harry Lee Coe, Jr., was the Recreational Director for our hometown, Lakeland, Florida until he left the job to become a 2d Lt. In the U.S. Army during World War II. He was in the Army Corps of Engineers in Europe. Dad joined the State Comptroller's office when the sales tax came in, and he opened the first office in Lakeland. He was prompted to head the Tampa office then continued his rise. Sales tax was put under the State Department of Revenue. He was appointed Executive Director and served from 1976 to 1979 until his retirement at age 70.”

Harry's parents outlived their only son. Father Harry, Jr. died Oct. 1, 2003. His mother Marjorie survived until Jan. 14, 2004. Remarkably, their marriage endured 72

years. Florence's three children adhered to the Coe tradition. Her daughter Lynn, whose life ended prematurely at 39, had an illustrious career as a lawyer in Broward County, last serving as General Counsel for the Sheriff's Office. Lynn received a glowing posthumous tribute from the Broward County Bar Association. Florence's former husband, M. Daniel Futch, Jr. is a Broward Circuit Judge. For many years, Florence was an elementary school teacher in Polk and Broward Counties. Her son Harry Lee Futch is an attorney in the legal department of the Broward County Sheriff's Office; another son, Daniel W. Futch manages the plant of a large box company in central Florida.

The future judge's early schooling was received in public schools in Lakeland, Polk County. The list of his achievements in high school athletics reads like something out of Tom Swift. His sister, his biggest booster, now and forever (other than his son, Harry Lee IV), provides a summary:

“He lettered in baseball, basketball and football at Lakeland High School. He had the highest point average every year in basketball. He was Center on the team with his childhood friend Lawton Chiles, Florida's former governor. Playing in the state baseball championship, he pitched a shutout. In his senior year in high school he won the Bill Stern Award as the best athlete in the State of Florida. Harry was a quiet and modest person who would never talk about his numerous honors. He said that he didn't have to because his kid sister bragged enough about him.”

Recognition beyond Lakeland of his talent as a gifted athlete came when received a combination baseball/basketball scholarship to the University of Florida. His pitching record at University of Florida stood for many years, and he was the first pitcher to be inducted into the UF Sports Hall of Fame. He signed a contract with the Detroit Tigers—the first individual from Lakeland to sign a major league contract; Boog Powell became the second Lakelander to be picked when he signed with the Baltimore Orioles. In

college he was a member of the Letterman's Club and Scholarship Fund Raising Committee. Also, ATO fraternity.

A popular jock in high school and college, Coe had to put his plans for higher education on hold to answer a call from Uncle Sam during the Korean War era, and became Private First Class, Infantry, in the Army of the United States. Stationed at Fort Jackson, S.C., he was fortunate to be issued a baseball uniform and glove instead of an M-1 rifle. A Tampa friend, George A. Levy, owner of a thriving business on West Kennedy Blvd. known as George A. Levy Awards, Inc. relates the story, confirmed by Tampa lawyer W. Crosby Few, that Harry Coe, just a couple of years older than Levy, became a star hurler for the Ft. Jackson ball club. At that time, Levy was stationed at Fort McPherson, Georgia, which had its own team. Competition between the two Army baseball nines was keen. Vinegar Bend Mizell, later of the St. Louis Cardinals, out dueled Harry Coe in what Levy says is the best game he ever saw. He also remembers that Tom McEwen of *The Tampa Tribune* devoted an entire column to that epic ball game. Harry Coe, George adds, was a hard worker at whatever he was doing at the time, giving extra-special attention to his pitching form. Harry had no problem with drugs or alcohol to pore over and studied greyhound-racing records and frequented the nearest track as often as he could.

Just over six feet tall, about 160 lbs., lean and lithe, Harry Coe had the stoical, steely countenance of a Gregory Peck—the film star whose connection with Coe will be touched upon later in this story. Harry had a keen sense of humor when prompted by circumstances, accompanied by booming laughter. In the late 1980s, Judge Coe and this scribe were exchanging pleasantries while walking down the first floor corridor of the

courthouse. It was about lunchtime and when asked by the former where he was having lunch, this writer replied that he was heading home for “leftovers.” For some reason, Harry found that response to be hilariously funny and he roared with laughter. Harry, his sister Florence says, was “a quiet and gentle person with a laugh that could light up a room. He sounded like Hawkeye Pierce.”

Upon his release from military service, he returned to University of Florida and completed the work leading to a B.S. degree in Physical Education. He pitched in the Detroit Tigers farm system for three years during the spring and summer seasons during the windup of his schooling at Gainesville.

Harry had a reputation for having 20/20 vision when it came to handsome women. His initial venture into matrimony with Ida Felicione of Tampa took place at Christ the King Catholic Church on July 3, 1959. He met the beautiful Ida at Wolf Bros. in downtown Tampa where she was working part-time while attending University of Tampa on a majorette scholarship and studying to become an elementary school teacher. She achieved fame as a fashion model and beauty contestant, becoming Miss Tampa in 1955-56 and a top finalist in the Miss Florida pageant. At the University of Tampa, she was twice inducted into Who’s Who in American Universities and Colleges, and after receiving a B.S. in Elementary Education, she taught for years in Hillsborough and Polk counties, with distinction. She could be objectively described as a statuesque, leggy brunette who now plays a major superior game of tennis. She retired from teaching in 2002. Their son, Harry Lee Coe, IV, is a busy, successful attorney in Tampa. Ida filed for dissolution of the marriage in 1973, and the couple remained on good terms over the ensuing years except for a dispute regarding her entitlement to alimony after the son

started school. The issue was litigated and decided in favor of Mrs. Coe in the Second District Court of Appeal, 352 So.2d 559. Judge Coe's marriage in 1976 to Ann Green of Sumter, S.C. produced two sons, Gregorie and Charles who, as far as is known, still reside in South Carolina with their mother. That marriage was terminated by divorce in the late 1980s.

In the late 1950s, while still attending law school at Stetson University, Harry Coe helped pay his way through that program by pitching baseball for the Tampa Tarpons of the Florida State League. In one memorable game with Coe on the mound, relying on his curve ball and finesse as a southpaw, he developed a bad blister on his pitching hand. Calling time, he informed the umpire that his jock strap had broken and he had to get a band-aid from the dressing room. Even with the temporary bandage on his finger, the Tarpons lost to the St. Petersburg Saints, 9-4. Harry went on to his best record in his five seasons of "part-time" baseball by winning 27 games and losing only 3. A local writer took note that Coe eventually became the only Hillsborough County Circuit Judge to have given up a home run to Willie McCovey, Curt Flood and Henry Aaron in his career.

Harry acquitted himself well at Stetson University Law, winning an American Jurisprudence Award for the highest grade in Bills & Notes and also Municipal Corporations. After graduating with his prized LLB degree, Harry became associated in 1962 with the Lakeland firm of Bentley, Miller, Sinder, Carr, Chiles and Ellsworth. The late George Carr moved on to become a United States District Judge. Lawton Chiles, a boyhood chum now deceased, became a popular U.S. Senator. After two years in Lakeland, Coe took on the challenge of Asst. State Attorney under Paul B. Johnson in Tampa. From 1965 to 1967, he was the resident Hillsborough County Attorney. Midway

through the latter year, he took assignment as the first prosecuting attorney for the Hillsborough County Juvenile Court, a position created by the decision of the Supreme Court in the Gault case. Some of us remember that Harry sat at the left of the late Judge O. D. Howell, Jr., for many years a Juvenile Court fixture at the Courthouse Annex. Yet another move was in the offing for Harry Lee Coe. For two years, beginning in January 1969, he was Chief Asst. County Solicitor.

Somewhere, perhaps in someone's dusty old bookcase, is a collection of fables about lawyers who became judges. You already know one of the most familiar: "A judge is just a lawyer who knew the governor." In the case of Honorable Harry Lee Coe III, the story, if it were true, is that the judge's father, Harry Lee, Jr. was sufficiently close to the Republican governor, Hon. Claude Kirk, Jr. in 1970 to facilitate his son's appointment to the Hillsborough County Criminal Court of Record. Interim appointments to fill openings in the judiciary were not uncommon during the Kirk administration. Only two years earlier, Kirk made Robt. T. Mann (now deceased) the beneficiary of such an appointment to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Dist. Court of Appeal with some sort of understanding that Bob Mann would switch his political party affiliation to Republican (Mann later went back to being a registered democrat). At any rate, the appointment came through in November 1970. So far as is known, Harry, a longtime Democrat, accepted it with no strings attached. In 1971, Governor Reubin Askew reappointed him. Then when Article V of the Constitution was modified in 1973 with abolition of the Crim. Court of Record over which he presided for so many years, Coe became by law a Circuit Judge.

Judge Coe ran the court over which he presided with firm determination to do what he felt was right and just. Consequently, he was universally liked by criminal defense lawyers—Judge L. A. Grayson, who served for long years before his death, a decade before Coe went on the bench, referred to lawyers seeking an edge as “the fair advantage boys.” Coe was a darling; so to speak, of law enforcement officers with cases before him who admired his tough stance against repeat offenders and parole violators. Contrary to the tag “Hanging Harry” seized upon and played up by the press, he was considered to be fair, particularly dealing with young persons having no significant criminal history. He believed in the familiar doctrine of “a second chance.”

Richard A. Hirsch, prominent Tampa lawyer and former Asst. United States Attorney in Tampa, first met Harry Coe in 1969. When E. J. Salcines became County Solicitor, Coe was named Chief Assistant, and Hirsch was a Division Chief for Judge Walter Burnside and later Judge Carl C. Durrance, and Harry was Hirsch’s immediate supervisor. According to Hirsch, Harry Coe was an extremely competent, though soft-spoken administrator, who was before his time in the use of mechanical equipment, word processors and the like. With reference to his experience with Judge Coe, he relates:

“After leaving the County Solicitor’s Office and as a young lawyer in private practice, I on occasion would represent defendants in criminal cases before Judge Coe. Inevitably, at arraignment, Harry would make a big production and greet me with the great enthusiasm so the general impression to my clients would be that their lawyer had a good and personal relationship with the judge. However, I can say unequivocally that despite the warm greeting my clients were treated with the same “sentencing philosophy” that Harry was known for during his years on the bench. In situations involving violent crime, he was a stiff sentencer. However, in property related matters and on occasion in drug cases, he could give defendants, especially young persons, a second opportunity but if you violated your probation you needed to walk into the courtroom with your toothbrush in hand.”

Howard L. Garrett, longtime Tampa attorney, reports that he had known Harry Lee Coe ever since he came to Tampa, principally from the tennis community.

Acknowledging that Harry was an outstanding tennis player, as would all those who knew him, Garrett talks about his observations of Coe as judge:

“When he went on the bench, he felt his way along rather slowly, in my opinion. Somehow he managed to generate a reputation of being tough; I really am unsure whether he cultivated this as a means of controlling his docket, and defendants and lawyers who appeared before him. Many times he would refuse to ratify or go along with a “plea bargain” which had been negotiated and which would, of course, scare the dickens out of the defendant. However, in just one such case I tried to get a plea bargain for a years probation, two years probation or three years probation, I can’t remember which, in front of him which he flatly refused. In this posture I was compelled to plead “open,” which I did and to my very pleasant surprise and the exquisite joy of my client, he didn’t administer any probation at all but dismissed the case. In my opinion, he was extremely forgiving of those who broke probation. I once ventured the observation that he would violate probation for excessive flatulence. In later years we all learned that he was addicted to dog racing, and again in my unscientific opinion he didn’t have a close friend that he could bear his soul to, and as a consequence he seemed doomed to keep repeating his shortcomings.”

Now retired and living in Lutz, Honorable Don Evans, who served with distinction on the Circuit bench, knew Harry Coe as a judge, fellow little league coach, golfer, one of the founders of DACCO, as State Attorney for the 13<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit and as a prosecutor in the celebrated Christopher Wilson case over which Judge Evans presided; more of the Wilson case lies ahead in this chronicle. From his unique vantage point, Judge Evans speaks candidly about Harry Coe:

“The first day he served on the bench, I was one of the two public defenders assigned to his felony division. Many times I took great issue with his rulings as to evidence and rules, but I never challenged his motivation for his rulings. He did what he thought was fair. Period. He had an extremely dry sense of humor. He and I coached our sons’ Little League teams. At the season-ending banquet (Pizza Hut), he announced that his faith in God had grown as a result of the season just completed. He explained that with all the flying bats, line drives that

barely missed hitting some oblivious child in the face, kids who collided at full speed, etc, without anyone getting injured, the only explanation had to be the divine intervention of God. He was a perfectionist as a golfer. Whenever he had an approach shot to a green, he insisted on walking up to the green to find out exactly where the pin was located. It drove the rest of the foursome crazy—to the point that they almost quit the game. During the 1993 Christopher Wilson trial, transferred to West Palm Beach (said to be the most celebrated case in Tampa history, by the national media) there were so many “explosions,” such as him objecting to his fellow prosecutor’s question, resulting in the poor guy quitting his job in the middle of the trial, that just about everyone expected an acquittal. However, after Harry made one of the best closing arguments I have ever witnessed, both defendants were convicted on all charges. And it was PCA’d on appeal.

Harry had a reputation of being tough as a judge, and there were occasions when that reputation was accurate. However, he often would give a defendant one last chance on probation, that other judges probably would not have given, if he felt that the defendant sincerely wanted to change his criminal behavior. When, approximately 30 years ago he became aware that Tampa didn’t have a drug treatment program, he provided the leadership for creation of DACCO, a highly regarded program that serves as a statewide model, even today.

So, there were many wonderful attributed of Harry Lee Coe that most citizens, and even the courthouse crowd, didn’t know about. He made a highly valuable contribution to his community and to the criminal justice system of Hillsborough County.”

In April 1974, ace *The Tampa Tribune* Staff Writer, Philip Morgan, reported that Judge Coe was seriously pondering entry in the next election as a candidate for Tampa’s mayor. That rumor was put to rest in early June when the judge issued a statement ruling out any such idea.

The following year, Coe had the experience, unique to a trial judge, of being invited not once but twice to serve in the capacity as an Associate Justice on the Supreme Court of Florida. In the highly publicized case of *Spinkellink v. State*, 313 So.2d 666, he sat with Justices Overton, McCain, Boyd, Adkins and Ervin (Ret.). Spinkellink’s conviction of murder and the death penalty, dissented, in an opinion lengthier than that of the majority one. Spinkellink was not executed until May 25, 1979. An irrelevant

footnote: Justice Ervin and the writer's late father were members of the Men's Sunday School class at First Presbyterian Church of Tallahassee for most of the sixties. The second case: *Tuz v. Chadbourne*, 310 So.2d 8, was a wrongful death action out of Escambia County. Judge Coe wrote the majority opinion finding no conflict with the landmark case of *Youngblood v. Taylor*, 89 So.2d 503, decided twenty years earlier, which established the doctrine of estoppel, by judgment in Florida. The same panel, which heard *Spinkellink*, participated. Justice Ervin was again heard to dissent.

Over the years, Harry Lee Coe was a strong supporter of Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Tampa. Glenn Permuy, now Senior Vice President of Boys & Girls Clubs of America in Atlanta, writes at length about his affection and respect for Harry Coe, of which the following is an extract:

“Harry Lee Coe III was President of the Board of Directors when I was named Interim Executor Director (Boys & Girls Clubs) in December 1976. Judge Coe was determined to turn the organization around and an infusion of money was needed. Even though he was restricted in his role as a judge from directly asking for money, he opened the three biggest doors to make this possible. In short, Harry's leadership turned a \$175,000 deficit into an \$8000 surplus (contributions from the County Commission, Jim Walter Corp. and a loan from Conn Foundation). In addition to being a feared Circuit Court judge, the Harry Lee Coe I knew was a phenomenal athlete, a tough but compassionate individual, an inspirational leader, a champion for kids, a man of his word, and a person I am honored to have called my friend.”

For 22 years Harry performed grueling duty, confronting five days a week a dreary procession of poor souls accused of felonies; most of them felt right at home in a criminal courtroom. He never drew opposition from would-be judges in every election for more than two decades, truly a remarkable circumstance especially in politically charged Hillsborough County.

Only Harry knew what prompted him to give up the prestige and security of his judgeship. But he did that in 1992 when, as a Democrat, he challenged the incumbent, widely respected Republican, Bill James. The results were amazingly close: James polled 148,678 votes (48.75%) to Coe's 150,270 (50.27%).

Thomas Dixon (1864-1946), now largely forgotten lawyer, clergyman and author, grew up in North Carolina right after the Civil War. His militantly Southern novel, *The Clansman*, published in 1905 became the literary basis for the epic film, the "Birth of a Nation," in 1915. While Dixon was still a youngster, he was asked what he planned to be when he grew up. He replied, "I'm going to be a Gawddam Pussecuter" (prosecuting attorney), something he had no doubt heard in the town square. Harry was 60 when elected to that powerful job, but he had considerable experience as an assistant "pussecuter."

Dudley Dickson, now retired in Lutz, was investigator and forensic specialist for State Attorney Coe. He was the source of several stories about his former boss—e.g. the not-infrequent occasions when Coe was stopped on the street by former felons who thanked him for turning around their lives and the compassion he showed, contrary to his reputation as "Hanging Harry;" About Harry's fondness for parades and walking great distances reacting to the crowds emulating his old friend, "Walkin Lawton" Chiles. Dickson lauded Harry Coe as "always a winner in both politics and sports."

Long after his baseball togs were put in mothballs, Harry took up tennis. His natural athleticism made him a winner in a relatively short time. Larry Dickson, a cousin of the aforementioned Dudley, played tennis with Harry for over 35 years. Those two were doubles champions at Palma Ceia Golf and Country Club in 1986 and 1991. Larry

Dickson's brother (Cal) now deceased held many championships in Tampa and was also a dedicated teacher to countless young players over many years. According to Larry, Cal was Harry's mentor at Davis Island's Tennis Club. Gene Vash was tennis professional at Davis Islands for 30 years. He and Coe teamed to win the City Doubles title in the 60s.

Gene's son, Dale Vash, also plays tennis but is better known as an upstanding lawyer with one of Tampa's largest firms. Tennis is a game taken seriously by people of all ages in this area, including Ida Coe and son, Harry Lee IV. Sandy Freedman, former Mayor of Tampa, a leading player as a junior, played doubles with Harry many times, remembering particularly his sliced service which would force the receiver to go way off the court. Sandy's father, Joe Warshaw, was an outstanding player even unto old age. "My dad and Harry were old friends. Harry was always quiet, a gentleman in every way. My family has fond memories of him," Sandy relates. Lou Monteleone, premier oral surgeon in Tampa, joined with Harry to win four Palma Ceia G & CC doubles titles. He reports an example of how much Harry hated to lose:

"I remember that on one occasion when he was playing a singles practice match with Bill Rheinhardt and things were not going Harry's way. It was match point against him with Bill up 7-5, 5-1. Harry walked to the gate, locked it as he left with Bill inside a vertical 15-foot high prison enclosure. This was before cell phones and Bill pleaded for Harry to open the gate, but Harry never looked back, nor did he ever mention this to anyone. Bill told me what happened some weeks later. P.S. Bill Rheinhardt was city champion in the late 60s, and is still one of the best seniors around."

Andy Garcia, former Tampan who moved to Miami in the 1970s and opened a citrus processing plant there seemed always to join with Harry for Tampa's businessman's doubles matches every year. The Coe/Garcia tandem was always assured of a #1 seed in those tournaments. There are two old scrapbooks reposing in the closet at the current Davis Islands Tennis complex, which are filled with news clippings about the wins and

losses in various matches beginning in the mid to late sixties. For example, on June 1, 1968, Coe & Garcia got into the finals of the Florida State Closed Men's championships. There is even a column by Tom McEwen, then Sports Editor of the *Tampa Times*, about the eye-catching attire of comely Laura Lou Kunnen of Clearwater (she had confederate battle flags stitched on the seat of her tennis shorts). That story went back to early 1959. This ancient reporter will be pardoned for noting that sometime in late 1960s, he and another southpaw, Hank Angulo, who still lives on Davis Islands, competed against Coe & Garcia in a doubles match and somehow took the second set from the #1 seeds, who, of course, mopped up the 3<sup>rd</sup> set to win going away. Anyway, it will always be something for the losers to mildly boast about.

P.J. O'Rourke, the humor writer, takes a playful backhand jab at the game of tennis in the following piece of his work *Modern Manners* published in 1989 and reprinted with permission of Atlantic Monthly Press:

Tennis has been discovered by people who are supposed to be bowling. The world is severely in need of relief from tennis. Do what you can by organizing games to be played on horseback. This will ruin almost any all-weather court and eliminate further tennis playing. Or you can insist on playing some more polite variation, like armchair tennis. Armchair tennis is played by two opponents seated on either side of the court in comfortable armchairs. Each player has a huge pitcher of drinks and a hundred cans of tennis balls. Neither is permitted to rise from his seat to turn a shot. The player who has to go to the bathroom first loses.

After the verdict of guilty in the Christopher Wilson case alluded to by Judge Don Evans earlier in this story, one of the news services released a photo of State Attorney Coe embracing the victim of the crime and his mother. Shortly afterward, Judge Coe received a cherished letter from Gregory Peck (Inset).

Harry Coe's obsession with gambling in greyhound racing became such a dominate force in his life that in his waning years it is undisputed that he caged money from his subordinate associates to support his pathological problem. Experts call it a "hidden addiction" because there are few signs or symptoms until it is too late. The National Council on Problem Gambling based in Washington, D.C., which maintains a 24-hour toll-free helpline for those needing help or information, reports there is a strong link between suicide and pathological gambling. Las Vegas' suicide rate is one of the highest in the world. It is absolutely clear that problem gambling is nothing to laugh about. There is a funny story, nevertheless, that Harry would have enjoyed, the writer believes. One night in Las Vegas, one crapshooter got so excited that his upper plate popped out and fell onto the table. The pit boss, who was running the game, after only a moment's hesitation, took out his own plate, threw it down and said, "you're faded."

One has to believe the Harry Lee Coe III, so dreaded public exposure and the shame and humiliation, which was sure to follow, that he was driven to take his own life with his own weapon and end the torment.

It is fitting to close this lengthy account with a quotation from his son, Harry Lee IV, of his professional credo intended as a tribute to his dad:

"In the courtroom I still try and emulate his (father's) decorum and demeanor. First, be serious, dedicated and committed to your cause. Second, be a man of your word; don't say something you won't or can't do. Third, the unspoken word often speaks loudest. My father, while light-hearted, friendly, and sometimes even playful in his courtroom, could cast a steely-eyed, spine-chilling stare so quickly across his courtroom, without saying a word, and everyone, lawyers litigants, and bailiffs knew exactly what he meant—"Business." Lastly, respect and understand the system, and what it is trying to accomplish—Justice and Fairness. If there is ever any "grey area" (and there often is!) use those tenets as guideposts; try to maintain the integrity of the overall process,

even in the absence of an express directive. Make the system work, and always strive to be one who is an honest, dedicated friend of the Court.”

Morison Buck

AFTERWORD:

We have a criminal justice system, which is superior to any in the world; and its efficiency is only marred by the difficulty of finding twelve men every day who don't know anything and can't read.

Mark Twain

375 North Carolwood Drive  
Los Angeles, California 90077

September 8, 1993

Mr. Harry Lee Coe 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Hillsborough County State Attorney  
West Palm Beach, Florida

Dear Mr. Coe,  
Congratulations on the verdict in the Christopher Wilson case.

Years ago I defended a black man in a rape case, and lost. It was on the screen, in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

When I saw this photo in the N.Y. Times, I could not help identifying with you, and thinking that in this case, you have played the role of Atticus Finch in real life, taken on the challenge, and won an important victory for all of us.

Yours sincerely,

Gregory Peck

