



THE JUDGE

THE LIFE & TIMES OF LOUIS B. DEMATTEIS

The Judge: The Life & Times of Louis B. Dematteis is a new documentary film for public television that profiles the influential life and career of San Mateo County Superior Court Judge Louis B. Dematteis.

Judge Dematteis, a pillar of the Italian American community, dedicated his life to public service, touching lives in the San Francisco Bay Area and throughout California. He grew up in Redwood City's Little Italy speaking Italian. He studied hard while holding down jobs, passed the bar at age 20 and became the youngest lawyer in the state. As a district attorney in the 1940s, he made headlines across California, leading late night raids on gambling houses throughout San Mateo County. He gave Sandra Day O'Connor her first job as a lawyer when no one would hire her because she was a woman. Appointed Superior Court judge by Governor Earl Warren, he reasoned against injustice and ethnic and racial stereotypes. For more than 40 years Dematteis used his leadership to change the social and political landscape throughout the region.

Today, the Bay Area is a diverse community filled with many cultural traditions. San Mateo County is a great place to live, because of men and women like Judge Dematteis. His story represents an important era in history that is quickly fading. As the years pass, the people who remember Redwood City's Little Italy will soon be gone. This documentary project will preserve Judge Dematteis' legacy and the story of tens of thousands of Italian immigrants who came to San Mateo County and California in the first half of the twentieth century.

The film is a co-production between KCSM-TV, the PBS member station in San Mateo, California, and independent producers Louis F. Dematteis and Mary Jo McConahay. The partnership is an excellent collaboration for this project. Dematteis has intimate knowledge of his father's story and access to photographs, archive film, and documents that will help bring this story to life. McConahay is an experienced journalist and documentary producer for PBS with many national credits to her name.

KCSM-TV has served audiences in San Mateo County for more than 60 years, producing documentaries that enrich the lives of Bay Area residents.

PROJECT STATUS

The production is currently in Research & Development & Fund Raising stages. The producers are working to raise funds from a variety of commercial and non-profit sources. They are also researching photo archives, film libraries, and contacting people who knew Judge Dematteis. The next phase of the project is production, which will include videotaping interviews and shooting relevant footage. The goal is to begin production in July 2006.



"I asked the district attorney of San Mateo County if he would consider me for a job. He was a wonderful man, Louis Dematteis, Italian American."
 -- Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.



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