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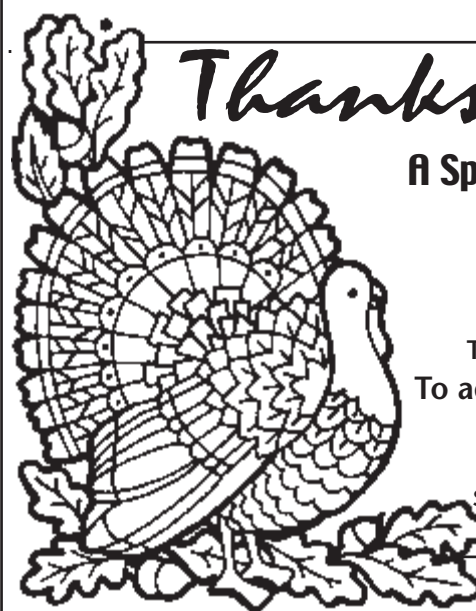
immigrants. He said in later years that his ruling in *Doe v. Plyer* was his most important decision. "Without that education, they would have been just a burden on the rest of us. They had the right to an education on the same basis as children of citizens." The ruling, upheld by the Supreme Court (5 to 4) in 1982 guaranteed millions of children throughout the nation the right to free education through grade 12. In an interview with *The Star Telegram* in 1998, Judge Justice said, "I found no case, no statute that covered the point of law that I had to decide. So I guess I made my own little contribution."

Throughout his 40 years, Judge Justice was admired and hated. He and his wife suffered social ostracism in their church and community. Death threats and hate mail arrived. Bumper stickers demanded his impeachment. There was deep passion among his supporters and adversaries. He was praised by columnist Molly Ivins in the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, who wrote in 1998 that Judge Justice had lived up to his name and "brought the United States Constitution to Texas." The same year, Lino Graglia, a constitutional law professor at the

University of Texas at Austin, said, "He has wreaked more havoc and misery and injury to the people of Texas than any man in the last 25 years." During the school desegregation furor at the beginning of his career, he was asked if he wanted armed guards for protection. He declined and instead signed up for taekwon do, the Korean martial art that provides self-defense.

Frank Kemerer, who wrote "*William Wayne Justice: A Judicial Biography*," described Justice as a soft-spoken gentlemanly man. "He was never a person who would dominate the conversation when he would go to lunch with his clerks." After his death, Kemerer summed up the core beliefs of the judge who safeguarded the rights of minorities, the poor, the mentally retarded and the powerless. "He had a transcendent value, which was to advance human dignity and provide a measure of basic fairness." The lieutenant governor of Texas, Bill Hobby, was succinct, "Judge Justice dragged Texas into the 20th century. God bless him. He was very unpopular, but he was doing the right thing."

Joyce S. Anderson is the author of "Courage in High Heels," "Flaw in the Tapestry," "If Winter Comes" and "The Mermaids Singing." She can be reached at JSAWrite@aol.com.



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