

# Daily Journal

www.dailyjournal.com

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2010

## Allan Littman 1919-2010

### Determined Problem Solver Never Really Wanted to Retire from Litigating

By Amy Yarbrough  
Daily Journal Staff Writer

**SAN FRANCISCO** — Allan Littman, a Bay Area trial litigator who was still winning landmark cases well into his senior years, died of cancer on Dec. 20. He was 81.

A resident of Tiburon in Marin County, Littman grew up in England, but his family had to evacuate to New York during World War II. He returned to London for college, coming back to the United States to study law at Harvard University.

After graduating, Littman and a law school friend headed across country by car, bound for Los Angeles, where both young men had job interviews lined up. Littman didn't quite make it that far.

"Once he saw the Golden Gate Bridge, his mind changed," said his son, Jonathan Littman. The elder Littman fell in love with San

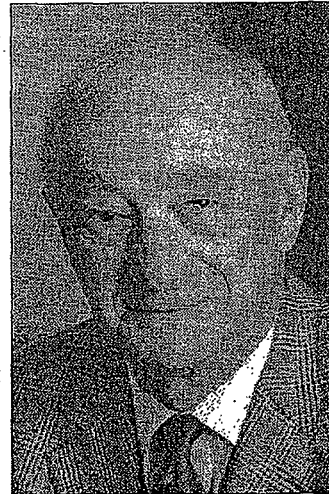
Francisco, got out of his friend's car on Van Ness Avenue and, with very little money in his pocket, headed for the YMCA.

His money had pretty much run out by the time he landed a job at the firm then known as Pillsbury, Madison & Sutro. He spent 42 years there, leading his own litigation group, and trying notable cases for major motion picture companies, among others. Littman also was chief trial counsel for the Federal Home Loan Bank Board of San Francisco in the 1980s as it investigated the Lincoln Savings and Loan, or The Keating Five, political scandal.

Littman was with another San Francisco firm BartkoZankel at the time of his death.

He was never quite ready to spend his golden years relaxing.

"He always had a youthful spirit. He was a tremendously curious man," Jonathan Littman said, noting that his father's interests



ALLAN LITTMAN

ranged from tennis to traveling, local politics and reading. Littman had no trouble devouring a serious book in the course of two or three hours.

"He loved to work, he loved to

think. He never stopped reading and pursuing new interests," his son said.

BartkoZankel partner John Bartko said Littman announced his retirement at least four or five different times, only to get drawn back in by a new case he found interesting. Bartko called Littman, "one of the most accomplished, experienced and effective lawyers I've ever met."

"He loved solving problems," Bartko said.

One of his most notable cases in recent years, while of counsel at BartkoZankel, led to a California Supreme Court decision against PricewaterhouseCoopers, giving parties the right to jury trial despite pre-dispute jury waivers. *Grafton Partners v. Superior Court*, 2005 DJDAR 9387

William Edlund, who knew Littman for more than 50 years, said that on the day he died, Littman called his secretary to give

her some last-minute instructions on a big arbitration the two were handling against Merrill Lynch. A \$3.8 million judgment in the case is expected to be confirmed in the new year.

Littman was "a very determined lawyer," Edlund said. "When things would seem the most bleak for our side, I'd hear him saying, 'We've got them right where we want them.'"

Littman is survived by his wife of 59 years, Caroline; sons Jeremy, Jonathan and Peter; six grandchildren; and two step-grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held at 1 p.m. on Jan. 9 at the Community Congregational Church, 145 Rock Hill Drive in Tiburon. In lieu of flowers, his family asked that donations be sent to Legal Community Against Violence, 268 Bush St., Suite 555, San Francisco, CA 94104.

amy\_yarbrough@dailyjournal.com