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## 54/08/02 Corrigan Also Noted as Prosecutor, Labor Attorney

Cleveland Press

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# Corrigan Also Noted as Prosecutor, Labor Attorney

When William J. Corrigan walked into a Bay View Osteopathic Hospital room and interrupted a deputy sheriff questioning Dr. Samuel H. Sheppard, he stepped onto a stage he has trod for nearly 40 years.

Attorney Corrigan, at 67, has been on both sides of criminal investigations and trials since he won his law degree at Baldwin-Wallace in 1915.

As an assistant county prosecutor he has put bank robbers and murderers in the penitentiary. As a defense attorney he has saved policemen charged with neglect of duty and a millionaire charged with murdering his wife.

Because of his criminal trial work in spectacular cases that splashed all over the headlines, Corrigan is generally known primarily as a criminal lawyer. But his other activities have been many and varied.

## Labor Attorney

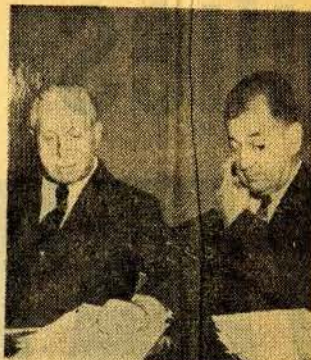
For more than a quarter century he was "organized labor's attorney" because of his close association with American Federation of Labor unions. He was a member of the Cleveland Library Board for 11 years and three times its president, resigning in 1950 when he moved to East Cleveland.

He has served on the Police Pension Board, was an elected member of a 1934 County Charter Commission. He ran for Common Pleas Court in 1944 and was defeated. He has been mentioned as a possible appointee to the Federal bench and as a possible candidate for mayor.

Aggressive, with the square jaw of a pugilist, Corrigan first began to make news in



With Lou Rothkopf



With Joseph Gogan



With Chief Matowitz



With Fred Thomas

1917 when he went into the county prosecutor's office as an assistant. By 1920 he was chief assistant prosecutor, and in that year returned to the private practice of law.

## Helped Unions

In 1921 he became counsel for the Cleveland Federation of Labor and for the Building Trades Council. Later he became counsel for the International Ladies Garment Workers (AFL), and in 1951 was given an honorary membership in that union.

Throughout the late 1920's

and early 1930's, Corrigan fought many court battles for labor's right to picket, organize and strike.

In 1937 Corrigan joined a CIO picket line in front of the Federal Knitting Mills and was arrested by Cleveland police. Mayor Harold H. Burton charged that this was a "stunt" to gain publicity for the Democratic candidate opposing Burton.

Corrigan's trials, which tend to draw crowds and create headlines, included the defense of Fred Thomas and the perjury case against Councilman William E. Potter in the land scandals of 1929. Potter was murdered before his perjury trial in what has been one of Cleveland's most famous unsolved murders.

## Defended Matowitz

In 1945 Corrigan was defense counsel for the late Police Chief George J. Matowitz in Mayor Thomas Burke's attempt to oust the chief. The Civil Service Commission dismissed the charges against the chief.

One of Corrigan's most famous cases was his defense of Mrs. Eva Kaber in 1921, whose trial for the hired murder of

her husband, Dan, was a nation-wide sensation.

Mrs. Kaber had been poisoning her husband but when this proved too slow for her, she hired assassins to stab him to death in their Lakewood home while she was at Cedar Point.

Mrs. Kaber was found guilty and sentenced to life in Marysville Reformatory, where she died in 1931.

A young woman reporter "covering" the Kaber trial for

the Cleveland News Leader, Miss Marjorie Wilson, later became Mrs. William J. Corrigan. They now live at 13540 Superior Rd., East Cleveland.

Most famous of trials in which Corrigan has figured recently was that of the rat-poison murder charge against Joseph Gogan, wealthy industrialist. Mrs. Gogan died from effects of rat poison thrown in her face.

Gogan was acquitted by the

jury. One of the features of the defense was evidence that a pet dog had survived the poison although he had been nearby when the fatal stuff was being thrown about.

In the famed Kefauver crime hearings, Corrigan had Racketeers Lou Rothkopf and Morris Kleinman refuse to talk.