

Dan Fleetham, in his own words: becoming the Canaan town judge – as told to Ann Wadsworth, 2012.

When asked how he became the town judge, Dan replied:

“You won’t believe the story I can tell you. I’m sitting there on the front porch [of the Cobb House] with the guests and my wife one afternoon and in drives the chief of police and the judge and the state trooper. And my wife said, ‘What in the sam hill have you done now?’ I said, “Nothing.””

So they go into the office and they sit there, talking back and forth a few minutes and they said to me

““You know Judge Barney has got to retire in October. He’s 70.”” I said, “Yes.” “And they said, “We want you to be the judge.” I said, “Me? I’ve never been in court in my life except for a speeding ticket’; what’s my qualifications?” [They said] “Well, we’ve watched you over the ears as Town Moderator. “And he says” You didn’t allow anybody to yell out because he had a few drinks. You shut him up and let the man talk as long as he talked on the subject.””

“and he said ;the thing we really like about you – the way you umpired the Little Leagues.’

‘Yeah, you made no bones about it; if a father kept yellin’ at his kid, you ordered him off the field.” And they said, “You would speak your own mind and stick behind what you said and that’s what we want because the lawyers today are getting worse and worse. It’s all letter of the law and half of the time you can’t use letter of the law because there’s circumstances out here””

Dan continued: " I went to to every meeting (Judges meeting and training session) they had, but they asked 'How do you run your court?'" "I said 'Fifty percent legal by the laws and the rules and 50 percent common sense.'" And I said, 'I think it's been a success. It proves out.'"

Dan said he never got paid much, but the reward of helping people in trouble was more than a large salary;.