

# Metro Business

Monday, August 10, 1987 ■ Copyright 1987, Des Moines Register and Tribune Company

## Lawyer lauded for high court victory

By LISA COLLINS

Register Business Writer

Lawyers all over the world are abuzz about Richard H. Doyle IV.

The Des Moines lawyer's phone has been ringing and the mail has been bringing Doyle congratulatory tidings from his peers. Doyle, a partner in the Verne Lawyer & Associates firm, recently argued a case before the U.S. Supreme Court that has international significance for foreign product liability cases — and won. The victory means it will be easier for those suing foreign companies to collect pre-trial evidence, lawyers said.

"The case is very significant. He did a good job, a credible job of presenting his side," said Ken Servay, a New Orleans lawyer.

"He did a fine job of addressing the major issues, and argued his position very eloquently. It's a very major case," said Gary Nedved, a Lincoln, Neb., lawyer.

### Wants to be Judge

Only about 20 lawyers currently practicing in Iowa have argued before the U.S. Supreme Court, the Iowa State Bar Association estimates.

But instead of trying to use the case as a ticket to wealth as a high-priced trial lawyer, Doyle said he hopes it will help him attain his real goal — becoming a justice of the Iowa Supreme Court.

Doyle, 38, who specializes in appeals, is normally a quiet man who enjoys the book work that he says most other lawyers consider te-

dious. Since his victory, he has received requests for copies of his brief and of the Supreme Court's opinion. He expects to receive still more calls in the months ahead when lawyers seek his advice as they try to exercise the Court's opinion in the lower courts.

"I wouldn't say this exactly opens doors, but it certainly adds to your legal career and your legal expertise," Doyle said. "After the opinion is published in the court reporter magazines, I will probably get more calls from lawyers who have similar cases."

### 1980 Crash

The litigation grew out of the August 1980 crash of a single-engine plane on a private airstrip near New Virginia in Warren County. The pilot, Dennis Jones of Des Moines, and two passengers, Charles Frederick of New Virginia and John George of St. Charles, were injured, but all three survived. Doyle represents George, who has deep facial scars and leg problems from the crash, Doyle said.

When George and Jones sued the French firm that manufactured the light plane, Societe Nationale Industrielle Aerospatiale, the company asked the U.S. District Court in Des Moines to shield it from pretrial discovery motions, saying the plaintiffs must seek evidence through the Hague Evidence Convention, a highly tech-

DOYLE

Please turn to Page 10B

REGISTER PHOTO BY CHARLES SCHLOSSER



Des Moines lawyer Richard Doyle

## PROFILE

## Doyle's dream is to be appellate judge

## DOYLE

Continued from Page One

nical treaty signed by 17 nations, including France and the United States.

Doyle argued that the treaty did not apply in this situation because he was not trying to retrieve evidence from France. He also said that France had set up a "Catch-22" situation by adopting a law that bars French citizens from providing evi-

dence to other countries.

Also, he said, France does not recognize pre-trial discovery as part of the trial process.

Federal Magistrate Ronald Longstaff denied Aerospatiale's request, citing the "impediments of discovery which the Hague Evidence Convention places on litigation in American courts." The Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed his ruling. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in June that the

treaty isn't the exclusive or even primary method of obtaining evidence in international disputes.

The court said federal judges may use their own judgment about when to follow federal court rules, rather than the treaty, for pretrial discovery, making it easier to collect evidence from foreign firms, Doyle said. The case was sent back to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals, where Doyle expects Aerospatiale to continue its fight against supplying evidence sought by the plaintiffs.

"John George was in the crash seven years ago, and we're still in the very, very beginning stages of a lawsuit," Doyle said.

He said, "I don't even want to guess how much time we've put in. They made us jump through all kinds of hoops so this thing took way longer than anyone could have guessed."

Doyle has been with the Verne Lawyer firm for 11 years. He said the George case is atypical of most of the firm's other cases because it is not expected to result in a large award for damages. He said George is not asking for a particular amount of money, but wants to be paid "enough money to reimburse him for his injuries and the changes in his life," Doyle said. Doyle graduated from Drake Law School in 1976. He spent a year as an assistant attorney general under Attorney General Richard Turner.

"Throughout life, I've been fortunate enough to be in the right place at the right time, and have been really lucky," Doyle said.

He is hoping that holds true in the next few weeks. He wants to be considered for one of the two Supreme Court seats vacated by Chief Justice W. Ward Reynoldson, who is retiring, or Charles Wolle, who was appointed recently as a federal judge.

"The things you do as an appellate judge fit right in with the kind of work I enjoy. Appellate work is what I'm best at," Doyle said.

The state nominating commission, which chooses three names for a pool of candidates, has not yet met to decide on the finalists for either seat, said Dick Vohs, press secretary for Gov. Terry Branstad. It will be this fall before the new judges are chosen.

"At this point, I'd say he has about as much chance as anyone else," Vohs said.

During the past few months, the Aerospatiale case has kept him very busy, Doyle said, and he's had to remind himself that his top priority is his family.

"They say the law is a jealous mistress, and it's true that it's hard to find a balance between the family and a demanding job," Doyle said. "I want to be there for my family."

Doyle said he has no aspirations to work for a high-powered firm in Washington D.C., New York or Chicago.

"First of all, I like Des Moines. I really don't care for the hustle-bustle of Chicago, or other big metropolitan areas. I feel like my roots are here, and we have close friends here."

Doyle said. "And, I know this is almost a cliché, but this is a great place to raise a family, so I intend to stay here."