Bar Memorial honors 78 deceased lawyers

October 21, 2015

The Mississippi Supreme Court convened on Tuesday, Oct. 20, to pay tribute to 78 attorneys who died during the past year.

Chief Justice Bill Waller Jr. presided over the annual Mississippi Bar Memorial Service, which was held in the En Banc Courtroom at the Mississippi Supreme Court in Jackson. A white candle was lit as Memorial Service Committee Chair Peyton D. Prospere read each name.

Justice Jim Kitchens of Crystal Springs told families, friends and colleagues, “These 78 Mississippi Bar members whose names have been lovingly sounded in this courtroom today served our entire state, and society at large, and we who remain are the poorer for their departure....Indeed, those whose memories we honor today will not soon be forgotten by countless numbers of the poor, the weak and the troubled persons for whom these dedicated lawyers provided help and hope during times of difficulty and despair.”

Justice Kitchens said, “Many of these lawyers’ most laudable deeds are known only by those who were the beneficiaries of their kindness, their compassion and their unshakable commitment to their professional duties. But at the same time, we who were privileged to observe and learn from these great women and men of the law are aware of countless instances of their having gone far beyond the extra mile in their persistent pursuit of justice for all, often with no expectation of being paid for providing the same quality of legal services for those who could not pay as they did for those who could pay them well.”

Mississippi Bar President Roy D. Campbell III noted that some practiced law for more than 60 years. Others died after very brief legal careers. “They served as examples to all of us with their service to the clients, the courts and to the public,” he said.

Among those honored was former Supreme Court Chief Justice Roy Noble Lee of Forest, who was admitted to the Bar in 1939. He died Jan. 21 at the age of 99. Other judges who died were Chancery Judge Daniel H. Fairly of Brandon, retired Chancellor Ray H. Montgomery of Canton, and former Chancellor Edward C. Prisock of Louisville. Other public servants who died included former House Speaker Tim Ford of Jackson; former Senator Martin T. Smith of Poplarville, who was the first director of the Administrative Office of Courts; and former Supreme Court Administrator Jack E. Pool of Dallas.

Here is a list of the deceased attorneys who were honored:
Program

Prelude  Dr. John Paul, St. Andrews Episcopal Cathedral

Invocation  Keith Tonkel, Pastor, Wells Methodist Church

Eulogy  Roy D. Campbell III

Resolution  Peyton D. Prospere

Response  Justice James W. Kitchens

Benediction  Keith Tonkel, Pastor, Wells Methodist Church

THE MISSISSIPPI BAR MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

October 20, 2015

WHEREAS, The Mississippi Bar gathers today with the Justices of the Mississippi Supreme Court to pay tribute to those attorneys who departed this life during the past year; and

WHEREAS, in mourning these colleagues, we recognize that each had a role in shaping our honorable profession. Some gave decades of service; the careers of others were cut short; but each had an impact on the endless pursuit of justice and the constant upholding of the dignity of law. They modeled for us a profession of dedication, honor, integrity, and wisdom, and reminded us that without the devotion they exemplified, the freedoms we enjoy would be endangered and our individual lives would be less rich; and

WHEREAS, these individuals, while devoted to the noble practice of law, also shared their lives, love, and devotion with their families, friends, and communities throughout the years, we today celebrate all their countless contributions to their profession, their communities, and their families and friends; and

WHEREAS, we give thanks for the great and honorable profession to which those memorialized today devoted their lives, and we acknowledge that, without the devotion they exemplified, the freedoms we enjoy would be endangered and our individual lives would be less rich; and

WHEREAS, in the reading of these names, we express joy and thanksgiving for each of the following individuals who impacted our lives through their service to our profession and with their dedicated friendship:
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the members of The Mississippi Bar assembled in this Memorial Service before the Supreme Court of Mississippi on this the 20th day of October 2015, pay tribute and honor to our deceased colleagues, and recognize their manifold contributions to our State, to our profession, and our society.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of The Mississippi Bar here assembled before the members of the Mississippi Supreme Court hereby extend their deepest sympathy and respect to the families of those colleagues whom we memorialize today.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Memorial be made a part of The Mississippi Bar’s permanent records and with the permission of the Justices, be entered into the Minutes of the Supreme Court of the State of Mississippi.

Respectfully submitted,
THE MISSISSIPPI BAR
Roy D. Campbell III, President