

JUDGE BYRD DOUGLAS

WHEREAS:

On the 11th day of August, 1965, Our Heavenly Father in his infinite wisdom saw fit to call to his eternal reward out greatly beloved friend and colleague, Byrd Douglas. Born in Nashville August 28, 1894, into a substantial and cultured family, his given name perpetuated the proud name of his Virginia forebears. His father's grain business on the riverfront furnished young Byrd with access to the river boat fraternity which colored and enriched his personality and lifetime activities, culminating in his authorship of an entertaining and authoritative book "Steamboating on the Cumberland" which enjoys wide circulation.

He pursued his education in Wallace University School for Boyd, Princeton and Cumberland Universities, where he was awarded his LLB degree. During his school years, and afterward, he was extremely active in baseball, having played and coached varsity teams, owned a Southern Association Baseball Club at Mobile, and served as Commissioner of a baseball league. His book "The Science of Baseball" was long accepted as authoritative in its field.

Byrd met, wooed and married Mary Stahlman, granddaughter of the late Major E. B. Stahlman, former publisher of the Nashville Banner. Mary Stahlman Douglas, who survives him, a scholar in her own right, enhanced and broadened the natural and acquired excellence of Byrd's learning, interests and skills, and was his constant strength, stay, comfort and encouragement through their years together.

Their home was blessed by the arrival of a daughter, Mary Byrd Douglas, now Mrs. George M. King, and of grandchildren, Douglas King, Mary Moody King and Claire King,

who were the apple of the judge's eye, and frequent visitors both at the Nashville home and their country place in Wilson County.

Byrd's legal career began in association with his brother, General Lee Douglas, and continued until his appointment as Judge. In 1942 he was appointed to succeed Judge A. B. Neil upon Judge Neil's elevation to the supreme court. In 1943 he was again appointed as Judge of the Second Circuit Court during the absence of Judge Weldon White in the armed forces of World War II. Upon Judge White's return from military service, Judge Douglas resumed the practice of law until 1947, when he was appointed to succeed Judge White upon Judge White's resignation. His service as Judge of Second Circuit Court continued without interruption until his retirement on May 1, 1965.

On September 1, 1958, he was selected by his fellow judges to be presiding judge and continued as such until his retirement. For the same period he served as Chairman of the Conference of Trial Judges of Davidson County, an informal fellowship association of the Criminal, Circuit, Chancery and Probate Judges of the County. Upon retirement he was designated Chairman Emeritus of that body.

This resolution, prepared by this committee of his fellow judges cannot ignore the warm affectionate relationship which constantly existed during his entire tenure. In his approach to any matter involving the courts, his attitude and policy was always one of conciliation, consideration and consultation. He always reminded the judges that he was their servant, and spoke for them only in conformity with their wishes. He had a way of inspiring cooperation and unanimity of thought and action which was at once wonderful and gratifying.

He was gentle in all his contacts. He was a nobleman in every sense of the word. Harsh, vindictive words were not a part of his vocabulary. His devotion to duty was constant. If he lacked a single quality of the ideal judge it was the ability to separate his work from his leisure hours.

It has been said of Byrd Douglas that he was born an aristocrat and died a democrat, each in the most wholesome meanings of the terms. He is reported to have said of himself shortly before his death, "No judgment I have rendered has been in favor of Byrd Douglas."

While his first love was his profession of the law, his activities were not confined to that. He was a versatile man with broad interests. He played an outstanding part in the affairs of his church and community; he was, indeed, in every way, a well-rounded citizen.

He brought to his work on the Court all the resources of character and learning that go to make a great judge. With a keen and powerful mind he possessed a thorough knowledge of the law in all its branches, and he had developed great technical skill and ability in the practical application of the law to the solution of judicial controversy. He had an enormous energy, industry and capacity for hard work, and was able to command the respect and love of all of the members of the Bar who came before him. He was infinitely patient and was as fair and free from prepossession as the lot of man allows; his whole concern was to arrive at the truth and justice of every case. As a result of his tireless efforts the Circuit Courts of this county were accorded the proper dignity and respect which all courts should have in these troubled times.

With a fine judicial temperament, he united an exhaustive conception of right and justice. These sovereign qualities shine through all his judicial work.

In thinking of his exceptional service for nearly twenty years on the court one cannot but think also of his personal relation with his brethren of the bench and

bar and his fellowmen. He was endowed with the qualities of mind and heart that give grace and charm to social life. He was in every sense a gentleman and radiated encouragement to everyone about him to likewise be ladies and gentlemen. His simple dignity, his gentleness of manner, his sense of humor, his consideration for others, and his unflinching friendliness made him a delightful companion and a lasting friend. No one ever had more or finer friendships with members of his profession than Judge Byrd Douglas. His associates on the court and at the bar revere him and they will cherish the memory of his association with us.

Be it therefore resolved by the Nashville Bar and Library Association in special memorial session assembled this 18th day of November, 1965, that this Association join with the community in mourning the loss of this great and beloved man; that we extend special condolence to his loved ones, and that copies of this resolution be spread upon the Memorial Book and furnished to his widow and family.

R. A. Miles,

Sam L. Felts, Jr.

Henry F. Todd,
Committee