

Massive Stroke Claims Life of Judge

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

Judge J.O. Bond died Wednesday, December 31, 2008, from complications of a massive stroke he'd suffered the day before. Bond, 70, of Lebanon, Tennessee, presided over the 15th Judicial District Criminal Court and handled cases in Wilson, Trousdale, Macon, Smith and Jackson Counties.

Upon graduation from Lebanon High School, Mr. Bond enlisted in the United States Air Force where he was stationed in Lincoln, Nebraska and Okinawa, Japan. He went on to graduate from Middle Tennessee State University and earned his Tennessee law license in 1971. He began practicing law with the firm later known as Agee, Bond, and Hunt.

Following his life long dream of public service, he was elected in 1990 as the Criminal Court Judge for the 15th Judicial District.

"Judge J.O. Bond was more than a judicial colleague to me," said Circuit Judge John Wooten, Jr., of Lafayette. "Over the past several years we developed a strong friendship and he had my utmost respect."

"Judge Bond was the first person to inform me of the creation of the judicial seat that I now hold," Wooten continued. "He encouraged me to become a candidate and with my election in 1998 we began a ten year judicial association, wherein we relied upon one another, working together on the criminal docket to make it more efficient."

"Others often referred to him as a firm or hard judge with a crusty demeanor. On the contrary, I found him to be a kind, empathetic, and generous man with a fabulous sense of humor and a dry wit. He had a colorful personality."

"J.O. Bond was a visionary," remarked Wooten, "who provided the leadership and the inspiration for the creation of the 15th Judicial District's Drug Court. This is a court that supervises individuals addicted to drugs, thereby causing them to commit crimes."

“Our program was one of the first in Tennessee history. It has a proven track record of success, supervising non-violent offenders.”

“The creation of this program is but one example of J.O. Bond’s empathy toward individuals who commit crimes due to addiction rather than to sustain a criminal lifestyle.”

“This district has lost a good judge and a good man,” said Wootten, “and I have lost a colleague and a friend.”

Contacted by telephone last Friday morning, District Attorney Tommy Thompson added, “I have known Judge Bond and his wife since college, and we practiced law during the same period of time prior to him becoming Criminal Court Judge in 1990. He has always been a good and fair judge and will be greatly missed.”

Funeral services were held Saturday, January 3, 2009, at the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Lebanon, Tennessee.

Bond is survived by his wife of 44 years, Jo Ann, and three sons: James O. Bond Jr., Joshua Bond and Joseph Bond.

Donations may be made in his memory to the 15th Judicial Drug Task Force, P.O. Box 307, Hartsville, TN. 37074; Humane Society of Wilson County, P.O. Box 247, Lebanon, TN. 37088; The Lebanon Cumberland Presbyterian Church Building Fund, 522 Castle Heights Ave., Lebanon, TN. 37087.