

MEMORIAL TO HONORABLE HOWELL N. PEOPLES

Howell N. Peoples was born on September 22, 1942, in Knoxville, Tennessee. He was the only child of Clifford and Helen Peoples.

Chancellor Peoples attended Claxton Elementary School through fourth grade. His family moved to Clinton, Tennessee, and he attended Clinton schools until his graduation from high school in 1960. He entered the University of Tennessee and received a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in 1964 and a Juris Doctorate in December 1966. He was a member of the Pride of the Southland Band while attending the University. He worked as a night clerk at the Knox County General Sessions Court while in law school.

Chancellor Peoples served his country in the United States Army.

Chancellor Peoples loved the law. The more challenging a case, the more he was involved. He was admitted to the Tennessee Bar in March 1967 and began practicing with Joe Magill in Clinton. He then continued his service to others by being the Senior Staff Attorney at the University of Tennessee Legal Clinic in 1969, supervising law students and providing legal services to indigent persons. In 1972, he became Executive Director of the Legal Aid Society of Chattanooga.

Chancellors Herschel P. Franks and Wilkes T. Thrasher, Jr. appointed Chancellor Peoples Clerk and Master of Hamilton County in March 1975. He was then appointed Chancellor of Chancery Court in May 1978 and served in that position for 32 years until his retirement in March 2010. By designation of the Chief Justice of Tennessee, he also served as Special Judge on the Tennessee Court of Appeals and the Special Workers' Compensation Appeals Panel of the Tennessee Supreme Court. After his retirement from the bench, Chancellor Peoples joined the law firm of Miller and Martin for a brief period.

In an interview, Chancellor Peoples said he not only found his work as Chancellor for 32 years tremendously rewarding, he also loved doing it. "It's a great position because every day is different. I also get to work with wonderful people. The lawyers in this community are excellent and make it a pleasure to go to court." He was a member of the Tennessee Judicial Conference, Tennessee Bar Association, Chattanooga Bar Association, Tennessee Bar Foundation, Chattanooga Bar Foundation, American Inns of Court, Tennessee Judicial Evaluation Commission (2003-2009) and the Chattanooga Civitan Club, where he served as President from 1987 to 1988. He was inducted into the Pro Bono Hall of Fame in 2016.

Howell was a good and honorable man. He was wise and had extraordinary common sense. He had a wonderful sense of humor with a pinch of mischief. He loved people, his community, and his profession. Most of all, he loved Linda; his sons, Chris and Cameron; his daughter-in-law, Laura; and his twin grandchildren, Emily and Connor.

For many young lawyers, Howell was a Chancellor, a father figure, a counselor, and a mentor. He had a serious but gracious judicial demeanor. He was kind to the litigants without displaying any favoritism.

The Chancellor's love of the law was evident. A lawyer entered his courtroom knowing he or she was expected to be prepared and to represent the client with the same high ethical standards by which Chancellor Peoples lived and served.

Howell loved the water and fishing. Originally, Linda was his fishing partner. Eventually, his sons would fish with him, then his grandchildren. His face would light up when they were with him. He made sure they hooked a fish – not each other. He would often come home from work and get in the boat to go out on the lake, not to fish as much as to just relax. He enjoyed traveling. The best trip was in 2018 when he traveled to Chattanooga to watch proudly as Emily graduated from GPS and Connor graduated from Baylor.

Howell was an avid Tennessee Vol fan, football and basketball.

Chancellor Peoples passed away August 10, 2018 in Vero Beach, Florida, after a brief illness.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, Therefore, Be it Resolved this 12th day of June, 2019 that this memorial in honor of the Honorable Howell N. Peoples be entered in the minutes of the Tennessee Judicial Conference and published accordingly.