

Memorial Resolution

Honorable George Robert Ellis

November 14, 1948 – November 15, 2021

June 2022

George Robert Ellis, Chancellor for the 28th Judicial District of Tennessee, passed away in his home, surrounded by his loving family, on November 15, 2021, at the age of 73, following a long and courageous battle with illness.

Chancellor Ellis was born on November 14, 1948, in the small West Tennessee town where he lived his entire life except for the years he spent in college, law school and in military service, Dyer Tennessee, to the late Dr. John Wesley Ellis and Georgia McElwain Ellis.

Following his graduation from Dyer High School, Chancellor Ellis left home for the first time in order to attend the University of Tennessee at Knoxville where he earned a bachelor of science degree. During the Vietnam War, he responded to the call of his country and joined the United States Navy where he earned a commission and served as a lieutenant junior grade.

After his discharge from the Navy, Chancellor Ellis enrolled in the Cecil C Humphrey School of Law in Memphis, Tennessee, where he earned a juris doctorate degree.

On returning home to the practice of law he met the love of his life, Jana Lee McDaniel, to whom he was married for the remaining 43 years of his life.

His first job as an attorney was with the prestigious Trenton, Tennessee, law firm of Harrell and Harrell, and in 1976, in addition to his law practice, he began what would become nearly a half century of service to the Tennessee judiciary when he became Municipal Judge for his hometown, the City of Dyer, Tennessee.

Two years later, on his 30th birthday, he was appointed General Sessions Judge for Gibson County, Tennessee, by Governor Ray Blanton, making Judge Ellis the youngest individual to serve in a constitutionally mandated judgeship in Tennessee history.

After serving 15 years as a general sessions judge, Chancellor Ellis was named Chancellor for the 28th Judicial District of Tennessee, in 1993, by Governor Ned McWherter, an office in which Chancellor Ellis served with dignity and dedication the rest of his life.

As a courtroom judge, Chancellor Ellis is remembered by his colleagues and community as a man of honesty, integrity, and courage, and beyond the bench he also distinguished himself by many, many acts of service to his state, counties he represented, and to his community. He was a past president of the Dyer Lions Club, the Gibson County University of Tennessee alumni Association and the Gibson County Chamber of Commerce. He also served as president of the Tennessee General Sessions Judges' Conference. He was on both the Board of Governors of the University of Tennessee National Alumni Association and also that of the Cecil C Humphrey School of Law as well.

Politically, chancellor Ellis was known as one of the bluest of blue dog Democrats, and he was an Al Gore delegate at the 1988 Democratic National Convention. His talents, interest, and abilities also took him beyond our national borders. After becoming a parent of a Russian exchange student for a year, Chancellor Ellis became a strong advocate of international judicial education, and he taught and lectured to Russian judges on law and democracy in both the United States, at the National Judicial College, and also in Moscow and other Russian cities as well. Along the way he also earned a master's degree in judicial studies from the National Judicial College.

For relaxation he raised and showed American quarter horses and American paint horses which he raised on his family farm, and he sometimes even rode them in parades in the district. He was a Tennessee Bar Foundation Fellow and a former Presiding Judge of the National High School Mock Trial Championship in Nashville, Tennessee. He served on both the Board of Deacons of the Dyer Cumberland Presbyterian Church and later, on the Board of Elders of the Trenton First Presbyterian Church.

And although after 45 years of devoted service to the people of Tennessee he closed his record of service as a Tennessee judge, he left behind him the many litigants who benefited from his unfailing loyalty to the law and his courage in interpreting and applying it, as well as a multitude of colleagues who mourn his loss and cherish his memory.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Tennessee Judicial Conference on this the 15th day of June, 2022, that we honor our departed colleague George Robert Ellis, with this resolution expressing our profound and deep sorrow upon the death of our distinguished longtime member of this conference. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED

that a copy of this resolution be filed in the archives of the Tennessee Judicial Conference and be enrolled in the records of both the Circuit and Chancery Courts of Gibson, Crockett and Haywood Counties in Tennessee and that a copy be presented to his family as a token of the esteem and honor in which he has been held and as an expression of our deep sympathy our mutual loss.

Respectfully submitted to the members of the Tennessee Judicial Conference, assembled at their annual meeting, on this the 15th day of June, 2022 in the City of Franklin.

Enter this the 15th day of June, in the year of our Lord 2022, being the 246th year of American Independence.