

Memorial Resolution

In Honor of Judge Gerald Leighton Ewell, Sr.

July 3, 1929 – December 1, 2021

June 2022

The Honorable Judge Gerald Leighton Ewell, Sr. of Manchester, Tennessee, passed away on December 1, 2021. He was born July 3, 1929, to Leighton Ewell and Elizabeth Jameson Ewell. He was predeceased by his loving wife Katherine Qualls Ewell, to whom he was married for over sixty years. Judge Ewell is survived by a daughter, Amy Ewell Stout, a son Gerald L. Ewell, Jr., a grandson Sam Stout, and a granddaughter Kirby Stout Zora. He was a member of the Main Street Church of Christ in Manchester.

Judge Ewell attended public school in Manchester and Coffee County and was known to his friends as Jerry. He graduated from Castle Heights Military Academy, in Lebanon, Tennessee, in 1947, received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Vanderbilt University in 1951 and received his Doctor of Jurisprudence degree from Vanderbilt University Law School in 1953. While at Vanderbilt, he was a member of Omicron Delta Kappa honorary leadership fraternity, Beta Theta Pi social fraternity, Phi Alpha Delta law fraternity and lettered as equipment manager of the Vanderbilt football team. He served as president of his law school fraternity, president of the Vanderbilt Law School student body and Chief Justice of the Vanderbilt Moot Court.

Upon his graduation from Vanderbilt Law School, he entered the United States Navy, attended officer candidate school and was commissioned Ensign. He served honorably on active duty for over three years with various aviation squadrons as an air intelligence and JAG officer, doing one tour of duty in 1955 at sea in the Pacific Ocean with Air Task Group Two aboard the aircraft carrier USS Philippine Sea off the coasts of Korea, southeast China and in the Formosa Straits. After active duty, Judge Ewell served six years in the active reserves as a JAG officer. He was commanding officer of his reserve unit and was discharged honorably in 1962 with the rank of Lieutenant (senior grade).

Upon his return to Manchester in 1957 after his military service, he was appointed Assistant District Attorney and held that part-time position for fifteen years. During his tenure as an Assistant District Attorney General, he was in the private practice of civil law with Harry B. Gilley and then with his father, Leighton Ewell. In 1972, he was elected Circuit Court Judge for Coffee County, and served continuously for twenty-six years. After retirement in 1998, he was designated by the Chief Justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court to serve as Circuit Judge in various counties in Tennessee and was called back to the bench by the Chief Justice to serve full time during the eighteen months of active duty in Iraq by his successor, the Honorable L. Craig Johnson. Judge Ewell also served on occasion as a Criminal Court of Appeals Judge at the request of the Chief Justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court.

Judge Ewell was a member and President of the Manchester Rotary Club. He served seven years on the Manchester Board of Education and two years a chairman. For more than thirty years, he was a member of the Board of Directors of the First National Bank of Manchester, acting as secretary to the Board during much of his tenure.

Judge Ewell was an avid ham radio operator, held an Amateur Extra Class license and received two public service awards from the American Amateur Radio Relay League. As his hobbies, he enjoyed flying giant scale model airplanes and beekeeping, giving most of the honey he harvested to appreciative friends

The Honorable Judge Gerald L. Ewell, Sr. was known to the lawyers who practiced before him and the litigants in his courtroom as a fair-minded, knowledgeable, well-prepared and courteous judge. It is my very great honor to present this resolution in tribute to him

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Tennessee Judicial Conference that the foregoing Memorial Resolution in honor of Gerald Leighton Sr., be entered on the minutes of this conference, that a copy be furnished to West Publishing Company for inclusion in Tennessee Decisions and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies thereof be furnished to members of his family. Respectfully submitted this 15th day of June, 2022.

Vanessa Agee Jackson

Presiding Judge for the 14th Judicial District, Part II