

Memorial Resolution

ROBERT E. BURCH

1947 - 2016

The year 2016 saw the passing from this life of the Honorable Robert E. Burch, after a long and distinguished career as Lawyer and Judge. Judge Burch was survived by his wife of many years, Frieda Spencer Burch, and his children, Dr. William E. Burch, Ashley Burch Grant, Daniel S. Burch, Richard W. Green, and Jeffrey S. Green.

Judge Burch was born March 11, 1947 in Hughes, Arkansas. He graduated from the Missouri Military Academy in 1965, attaining status of Cadet First Lieutenant and Battalion Adjutant. He graduated from the Citadel Military College in 1969 and continued his education, graduating from Vanderbilt University School of Law in 1972.

During his years at Vanderbilt, he obtained his commercial pilot's license and worked for Capital Airways from 1969 to 1972 as a flight instructor and charter pilot.

Judge Burch began his legal career as an Associate for White & Regen, Attorneys at Law, in Dickson Tennessee in 1972 and was later a Partner for White, Regen, Burch, & Beasley from 1975 to 1980. He was elected President of the Tennessee Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers in 1979, served as Juvenile Court Referee for Dickson County from 1973 to 1980, and was Chairman of the Governor's Task Force on Tort Law Reform. He was the author of the Trial Handbook for Tennessee Lawyers, in continuous publication since 1980.

Judge Burch was appointed Circuit Judge on January 29, 1980, and was subsequently elected to that position in 1980, 1982, 1990, 1998 and 2006, retiring at the end of his term in 2014. He holds the distinction of being the longest serving Circuit Judge in the history of the Judicial District, dating back to 1834.

As Judge, he loved and respected our Judicial System, and expected all those appearing in his Court to respect the law. He was proud of the nickname given him

by attorneys and litigants, Sweet Old Bob, which many shortened to the initials, much to Judge Burch's delight.

Judge Burch's greatest contribution to our Justice System came in 2000 when he founded the 23rd Judicial District Drug Court. He served as presiding judge over the Drug Court until his retirement, and following his retirement, remained an active Team Member, offering his unique wisdom and insight in a continuing effort to assist defendants in their path to rehabilitation. His compassion for people in the throes of addiction, and his positive impact on those lives will be the lasting memorial to his distinguished legal career.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Tennessee Judicial Conference that by these proceedings we recognize and memorialize the life and service of our departed friend and colleague;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Tennessee Judicial Conference that the foregoing Memorial Resolution be entered on the minutes of this conference, that a copy be furnished to West for publication in Tennessee Decisions and that copies of this tribute and resolution be furnished to his family.

This 14th day of June 2017.

Respectfully submitted,
David D. Wolfe
Circuit Court Judge
Division I
23rd Judicial District