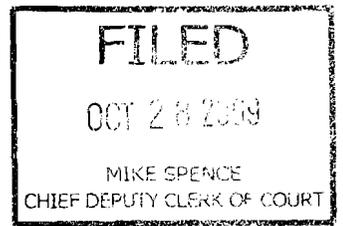


Memorial for
EDWIN L. BLEWER, JR.
Presented at the Memorial and Recognition Ceremony
Held by the First Judicial District Court
October 28, 2009
Under the Auspices of the Shreveport Bar Association



Mike Spence

MAY IT PLEASE THE COURT:

Edwin L. Blewer, Jr., was born June 7, 1933. He died January 27, 2009. Known as Ed, he graduated from Byrd High School, LSU, and LSU law school. He was first in his class, a member of the Law Review, Order of the Coif, and O.D.K. He served in the U.S. Army before joining the law firm of Cook, Yancey, King & Galloway, where he practiced for fifty (50) years. He married Julia. They bought a house on Elmwood. He often joked about having only one spouse, one house, and one job.

Throughout his career, Ed believed in and demonstrated service to his community, profession, and colleagues.¹ He was the President of the Shreveport Bar Association (SBA) in 1988. He received the SBA Professionalism Award in 2004. He served in the Louisiana Bar Association's House of Delegates and on the Board of Governors. He received its President's Award in 1995, and was a member of the Louisiana Bar Foundation.

Ed spent his life paying it forward. For people who found themselves in trouble, he was there. He made it his business to help. He always had time to help one more – one day at a time. In the words of one of his long-time partners, Ed Blewer was truly a remarkable man.

Ed's time and work saved many a legal career. In 1985, Ed, along with four other attorneys, helped found the Impaired Lawyers Committee of the Louisiana State Bar Association, which evolved into the Lawyers' Assistance Program. He chaired the State's Bar Association Committee on Alcohol and Drug Abuse for six years and served on it until his death. On a national level, he was a member of the American Bar Association's Commission on Lawyer Assistance Programs. He chaired it from 1998-2001.

In addition to his work with lawyers, Ed gave his time to the community in general. He was president of the Northwest Louisiana Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse in 1987. He received the Council's Wayne Drewry Award for outstanding service to the community in 1989. He served on and was President of the Board of the Louisiana Association for Compulsive Gambling. He was

appointed to Louisiana's Commission on Addictive Disorders by the last 5 governors. Ed was a member of the First Presbyterian Church all his life. He also served as President of the Demoiselle Club and of the Holiday in Dixie Cotillion Club.

In November of 2008, Ed was named "Samaritan of the Year" by the Samaritan Counseling Center. He was deeply touched by this honor.

Ed had three passions. First was his family. He was devoted to his wife, Julia, his children, Edwin and Julie, and his grandsons, Daniel and Robert. Second was "The Cabin" in the Jemez Mountains of New Mexico, where he loved for his family to gather. Third was his work helping people who found themselves in trouble with alcohol or drugs.

Practicing law is hard. Practicing law right is even harder. Ed Blewer did his best to practice law right. Ed knew what the law could do for you, that it could open many doors. He also knew what it could do to you, if unbalanced, unchecked, or abused. Ed learned to keep it in perspective – prioritized. He never claimed to win every trial. But he had an enthusiasm for the law, and life. He committed himself to making things better, getting it right, and helping people along the way.

Ed Blewer was not just a lawyer, he was a good lawyer. Not necessarily in the sense of being better than all the other lawyers he squared off with in the court room, with more words and more arguments (although he had plenty of those), but he was one of the good guys. He was a gentleman, and he treated other people, lawyers, witnesses, and the court with respect. As a lawyer and a person, he was a good man. Whether you were on his side of the courtroom, or against him, you knew he respected you. You also knew that you had better be prepared because he could, and probably would, bring out the best in you.

Ed litigated. He enjoyed a good trial. He had a feel for the right word, the right argument, and the right piece of evidence at the right time. He loved to talk. He knew how and when to listen. He was also a talented writer. The right combination of thoughts presented in a simple, straightforward style, best explains how a complex series of facts and a complicated body of law really has a simple solution.

Who, what, when, where, why, and how – the basics. Those were his tools. He was always digging in depositions, discovering and exploring people's memories and motives. He was a

presence in the courtroom, constantly presenting his case, guiding the court, and teaching the jury – looking for and showing what really happened. On the wall in Ed’s office, there was a quote from Alice in Wonderland. The Judge at the Knave’s trial was the King. “Give your evidence,” said the King, “and don’t be nervous, or I’ll have you executed on the spot.” Simple, straightforward, and effective. That was Ed Blewer.

Ed especially enjoyed working with the Sheriffs in northwest Louisiana. He routinely represented the Sheriffs in Caddo, Bossier, Webster, Claiborne, Bienville, DeSoto, and Red River Parishes. He also worked with the Sheriffs in Natchitoches, Sabine, Lincoln, and Union Parishes. Not only does a Sheriff enforce the law and house prisoners, but he can be one of the largest employers within a parish. It was quite an experience to walk through a Sheriff’s office with Ed. If given the chance, he would talk to every deputy there. I think he knew each and every one of them by name, and their background.

With the Sheriffs there is a unique blend of law enforcement, politics, and people. Representing Sheriffs was a perfect fit for Ed. Ed’s father (Edwin L. Blewer) was the Caddo Parish District Attorney from 1942 to 1960. His great, great, great uncle (John O. Sewall) was the first mayor of Shreveport. In a Sheriff’s office, civil and criminal law often mix on a daily basis, and can be difficult to separate. In Ed’s world, law, government, and a helping hand interacted with all citizens, from first time prisoners to multiple-offenders, from law abiding tax payers to those who thought they were above the law.

In addition to the Sheriffs, Ed enjoyed working for the railroad. In every case, there were multiple witnesses, each with a different perspective, and all with a different story to tell. He was fascinated with trains and how they operated. He could go on and on about how he had ridden them for hours and hours as a child. He was constantly planning on how to get his grandkids on a locomotive.

Ed liked the flexibility of being a lawyer. He saw each case as an opportunity to learn about something new, new people and new ways of looking at and doing things. He was a student of the law, as well as a teacher.

Ed came to know early on that many people – even smart, tough lawyers – can be wounded

and broken and in need of care. Having confronted his own problems and worked on healing his own wounds, he made it his calling to help others. Similar to the way he helped many people straighten out their lives, Ed took the time to mentor young lawyers and point them in the right direction.

One such lawyer wrote:

When I was a young lawyer, I had the opportunity to help Ed with the defense of police officers. Ed gave me the leeway to handle client interviews and take the deposition of the opponent, while at the same time, providing the guidance essential to a new associate. When we won the case on summary judgment, he credited an associate with the win. When the summary judgment was reversed on appeal, Ed took the heat for the loss. We could all learn from Ed.

Another wrote:

I had been at the firm about a year and was in the midst of preparing for the Texas bar. Ed asked me to do a motion for summary judgment on a prisoner case in which an inmate claimed inadequate medical care. I got the motion to him the day before it was due. It was full of holes. Ed sat down with me calmly and in a very kind, supportive way showed me how to fix it and gave me sage advice on how to prevent this problem in the future. Many lawyers would have ranted and raved and told me how stupid I was, and then gone around telling other lawyers in the firm what a sorry job I did – but not Ed. He was very caring and very supportive. Shortly after that, he gave me a race discrimination case to work on and helped me each step of the way all the way to trial (in November of 1993). We won. I am glad he took the time to support and encourage, and ultimately teach a young lawyer, and give him a second chance.

And yet another:

When I joined Cook, Yancey (in 1991), Ed Blewer was assigned as my mentor. In retrospect, that was one of the best things that happened to me in my career. Ed took on the task of being a true mentor rather than just having the title. He took me under his wing and showed me how to do things before asking me to do them. He showed me the big picture of practicing law. He practiced law the right way and tried to teach me to do the same. The most valuable lesson I learned from him was to apply a common sense practicality to the practice of law. Like most young attorneys, I was focused on the legal issues of each matter. He taught me that often the legal issue is less important than the personalities involved and the effect our actions will have on clients, other attorneys, and the court. Ed always treated other attorneys with respect and courtesy, even if they were one of the more difficult attorneys to treat that way. Ed taught me, protected me and passed on clients to me. I always appreciated him, but I realize only now in retrospect just how fortunate I was to have him as a mentor and a partner.

Interestingly, each of these tributes could have been written by any one or all of the numerous associates that had the privilege to work with Ed .

I am honored to offer this memorial in memory of Ed Blewer, and move that it be filed and made a part of the permanent record of the First Judicial District Court, and that copies be presented

to Ed's family and forwarded to the Louisiana Supreme Court for further recordation as appropriate.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James R. Sterritt".

James R. Sterritt

Endnote:

1. 52 La. Bar Journal 494, 500 (2005).