

**Memorial for  
JAMES B. GARDNER  
Presented at the Memorial and Recognition Ceremony  
Held by the First Judicial District Court  
November 5, 2015  
Under the Auspices of the Shreveport Bar Association**

***MAY IT PLEASE THE COURT:***

James B. Gardner, Sr., was born on Friday, March 17, 1944, at Schumpert Hospital in Shreveport, and passed away on Sunday, August 30, 2015, while visiting family in Baton Rouge. He graduated from C.E. Byrd High School in 1962, then went on to Tulane University for his bachelor's degree and then Tulane Law School for his J.D., which he completed in 1969. While in New Orleans, Jim met Sally and they married in 1969, returning to Shreveport where Jim was a law clerk for the Second Circuit Court of Appeal. Thereafter, Jim began a career of 45 years at what was then known as the law firm of Lunn, Irion, Johnson, Salley & Carlisle, and which now includes his name as Lunn, Irion, Salley, Carlisle & Gardner. Along the way, Jim and Sally were blessed with two beautiful children — a daughter, Kelly, and a son, James, Jr., known as "Jay".

Mostly a quiet and gentle man, Jim also knew how to have a good time. His sense of humor was well known, and he enjoyed a good laugh, even if he was being kidded by his friends or his law partners. In the legal community, he was highly regarded by his peers. Upon news of his passing, our firm immediately began hearing from many clients and colleagues, including lawyers who had often been his adversaries. The descriptions were without exception apt: "a gentleman's gentleman", "a real mentor to me as a young lawyer", "a worthy opponent", "honest and hard-working", "real integrity", and others too numerous to itemize here — but you get the gist.

Simply stated, Jim Gardner was a very good man and a very good lawyer. He knew how to express complicated things simply, yet keep them powerful — and that is truly an art. In his cases, he was thoroughly prepared and would take no prisoners in the courtroom, yet he treated everyone with respect. And he was respected in return by judges, other lawyers, jurors, clients, and business associates. Truly, I cannot recall ever hearing a bad word said about Jim, whether as a lawyer or just as a person. His long career at Lunn-Irion is a testament to his loyalty, and that's how others felt about him as well — he had the same secretary, Shirley Walker, for the last 36 years, and she describes him as having the patience of Job, and of being a friend and mentor to her, as well as a boss.

Throughout his career, Jim found a balance between work, the family he cherished, and his community. He was very fond of the East Shreveport Rotary Club, of which he was a past president. Along with Sally, he was active in the Krewe of Justinian, and served as its King in 2005 - 2006. Outside the profession, he enjoyed travel, and he and Sally took numerous trips, within the United States as well as abroad, especially during the last several years. Jim also liked to read — yes, other than law books — and he was a weather and geography buff as well. He also loved music, and was closely associated with the Wideman Piano Competition.

Perhaps the most interesting and notable of Jim's contributions was to society as a whole. In 1973, Kelly was born with significant disabilities, and this led Jim down a road of over 40 years of service to the Arc organization, both on a local and a national basis. To say that his service was tireless would be an understatement, but also in a way inaccurate — because to Jim, it was a labor of love, not a chore. In addition to serving on the board of directors and as president of the local Arc chapter, Jim was president of the national association from 1990-1992. He also chaired the Legal Advocacy Committee of the national Arc in 1995, and served on that committee until his passing. In recognition of his service, the Louisiana State Bar Association honored Jim with the Crystal Gavel Award in 2003 — according to the official description of this award it is given to lawyers who have been "unsung heroes" in their communities.



Because the Arc was such an important part of Jim's life, I want to share some comments that were made about him from his colleagues there after his passing. The following is a tribute that was presented by Ron Brown, President of the Arc US, at the Opening Plenary of this year's national conference that was held in Indianapolis, Indiana:

Before we move into our program, I wanted to take a moment to recognize Jim Gardner, an amazing member of The Arc's family who recently passed away. Jim was an active member of The Arc's network for more than 40 years.

Over four decades, Jim served on local boards, The Arc of Louisiana Board, and then The Arc's National Board of Directors where he served as president. When Jim's time on our board ended, Jim's commitment continued. Jim served as the Chairman of the Legal Advocacy Committee from 1995 until his passing two months ago. In addition to his work on the Legal Advocacy Committee, he was also actively involved in helping to rewrite our position statements. He was one of the leading experts on disability rights' policy in our country - his work ensured justice for countless people and the impact of his work will be felt for decades to come.

For those of you who were lucky enough to work with Jim, you knew that he was a stalwart advocate who never backed down. When it came to ensuring the rights of someone with I/DD were being recognized, Jim would not rest until he had exhausted all means necessary to ensure justice was served.

Jim's legacy will live on - from his work on the *Olmstead* decision, to his efforts just last year with the Supreme Court's decision in *Hall v. Florida* - Jim was a champion.

Jim will be missed, but his legacy will live on. I hope that those of you who knew him will take time in the coming days to reminisce and share stories about this remarkable man who did so much for our mission.

I'm told that there were over 700 people in the audience at this session, and that, at the end of these remarks, there was a standing ovation for Jim. What an appropriate tribute!

Similar sentiments were received from Ms. Janet Parker, Executive Director of The Arc of Caddo Bossier:

It is such a privilege to share with you a brief summary of a 40+ year commitment Jim Gardner made to serve men, women and children of this country, and their families, impacted by disability issues.

Here on the local level, Jim served on our Board of Directors of The Arc Caddo Bossier for over thirty years, but encouraged term limits as a way to bring on new people to help us achieve our Mission. Jim was particularly interested that we pursue young parents, as he and Sally had begun their incredible venture into the world of disabilities as young parents many years ago. But Jim assured us that he would continue to be available to The Arc for any cause or committee, and of course, he always was.

Jim served in every capacity imaginable on our Board; he was known as one who never told us "NO!" He was an outstanding President for us, and he also served as the state President of The Arc Louisiana, where he made indelible changes to strengthen our advocacy movement statewide.

Jim went on to serve on the national level by contributing in many different capacities on the Board of The Arc/US. Jim was the first President of that August body from Louisiana, and remained active in critical roles for The Arc/US the rest of his life. Simultaneously, Jim was a founding member of The Arc CADDO-Bossier Foundation, and served as its Registered Agent from its charter in 1997 until his death, ever-supportive and leading others to contribute, as well.

In 2003 the Louisiana Bar Association honored Jim with the Crystal Gavel Award. In 2006, The Arc/US honored Jim with its most prestigious and highest accolade, the Franklin Smith Award. Jim was only the 11<sup>th</sup> person so honored in The Arc/US's 56 year history at the time he was awarded this excellent tribute.

Annually Jim committed to help The Arc/US update its "position papers" viewed as critical in unifying advocates nationwide on issues affecting the lives of persons with disabilities and their families. Additionally, Jim chaired the critical Legal Advocacy Committee for decades.

Jim provided leadership by offering his superior legal mind to confront injustice for citizens with disabilities that impacted thousands and thousands across the nation. The landmark *Americans with Disabilities Act*, and the milestone *Olmstead Act*, impacted thousands of American for the immeasurably better. Just last year, Jim worked on the *Hall vs. Florida* case that went to the U. S. Supreme Court.

There has been no greater champion -ever- for persons with disabilities and their families than Jim Gardner.

It's good to know that Jim's contributions are so well-regarded.

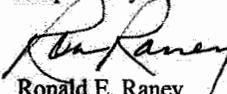
I worked with Jim at Lunn-Irion for 34 years, having begun my career there in 1981. He was a mentor and a friend — intelligent and capable, and just as importantly, always available. Except for times when some case or life situation made his schedule simply unchangeable, I never remember a time when he didn't agree to help me with covering a deposition, taking over or assisting with a project or an entire case, or merely sitting down to offer good counsel. He was just a solid and reliable guy — he had one wife of 46 years and they had one home, and his whole career of 45 year was spent with one law firm. You can't get more solid and reliable than that.

To add one last thing as a personal note, it's funny sometimes how things come full circle. Jim was one of the firm's lawyers who interviewed me during my senior year at the LSU Law Center. Some years later, it was Jim who came to my office, shook my hand, and presented me with my first paycheck as a partner in the firm. "Fast forwarding" to August 28, 2015, just two days before he passed away, Jim popped into my office out of the blue, cup of coffee in hand, and just wanted to chat — he felt great, and we sat and shot the breeze and laughed and joked for 15 - 20 minutes. I have a mental image of him heading out my door, lighthearted and happy about heading to Baton Rouge with Sally to visit Jay's family. Not quite 48 hours later, I received the call letting me know he had died.

I mention this story to you as a reminder that none of us is promised even one more day here on planet Earth. For those of us who are lawyers, especially those involved in litigation, we are, by definition, constantly involved in an adversarial atmosphere that, if we allow it, can spill over into other aspects of our lives so that we become constantly stressed out and generally unhappy. Jim was one of those who didn't allow such a thing to happen, and he did it by balancing his work with his love of others — his family, his friends, those with whom he worked, and others that he served so selflessly. That should be an example to all of us.

I am honored to offer this memorial in memory of Jim Gardner, 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 Jim's family and forwarded to the Louisiana Supreme Court for further recordation as appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Ronald E. Raney