



MEMORIAL FOR
JUDGE DEWEY E. BURCHETT, JR.
PRESENTED AT THE MEMORIAL AND RECOGNITION CEREMONY
HELD IN THE
FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT
OCTOBER 28, 2010
UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE
SHREVEPORT BAR ASSOCIATION

Dewey E. Burchett, Jr. was born on November 18, 1939. He was raised and attended school in Benton, Louisiana, where his father, Dewey E. Burchett, Sr. was Parish Engineer for Bossier Parish. Judge Burchett graduated from Benton High School in 1957, and thereafter he attended Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge, graduating with a Bachelor of Science Degree in 1961. In 1962 he entered the United States Air Force, where he served until 1967. After his discharge from the Air Force he attended Louisiana State University Law School and graduated with a Juris Doctor degree in 1970.

While in the United States Air Force, Judge Burchett discovered two very important loves in his life. The first was the love for flying. Dewey served as a jet aircraft pilot and became a Flight Instructor for young pilots. His love for flying continued until even after he was elected District Judge, when he was active in the Civil Air Patrol, eventually becoming the Squadron Commander of the Civil Air Patrol sometime after 1990.

The second and most important love Judge Burchett developed while in the United States Air Force was for Patricia Bolender Burchett. Dewey

and Pat were married on November 23, 1967, a marriage that lasted 42 years. Patricia Burchett became the most important person in his life, and their marriage resulted in the birth of two sons, Dewey E. Burchett, III and Edward Bolender Burchett. Judge Burchett and Patricia were also blessed with one granddaughter, Catherine Elizabeth Burchett, who was the delight of Dewey's life. Dewey and Pat were blessed to have both of their sons and their granddaughter living near their residence in Benton, Louisiana.

After graduating from LSU Law School, Judge Burchett returned to Bossier Parish and began the general practice of law with J.L. Thomas and Mickey Prestridge. Their firm of Thomas, Prestridge and Burchett represented numerous contractors and business clients, as well as many private citizens of Bossier City and the surrounding area.

During this time, Judge Burchett served as the attorney for the Bossier Parish Levy Board and helped secure funding for strategic projects, including the Red River Waterway Lock and Dams. He also served as City Attorney for Bossier City, Louisiana. He was active in the Bossier City Jaycees, and he served a term as President. He served as moderator for the Louisiana Presbytery of the Pines; he was active in the Bossier City Lions Club; and he was a faithful member of the Benton United Methodist Church, serving for many years as the Sunday School teacher of a men's class.

Judge Burchett practiced law in Bossier City until 1988, when he was elected District Judge of the 26th Judicial District Court for Bossier and Webster Parishes where he served until December 31, 2008. During his 20 year tenure, he became Chief Judge and exhibited his unusual leadership abilities by heading a movement for the building of a new courthouse and the renovation of existing facilities. He was very proud that the people of Bossier Parish responded by passing the necessary tax for that project and that the construction was completed during his time on the bench. He was able to devote time to that project without interfering with his duties on the bench, and it may well have been that he and Sheriff Larry Deen were the persons most responsible for the completion of that project, which now serves as a model for the legal community and the justice system.

Judge Burchett also enjoyed life. He was a gourmet cook, and he enjoyed cooking for his family and friends. Dewey also took up the game of golf, but the reports I received from him as well as my own personal observations indicated that he would never have won a prize in that sport. Still he persisted.

The persistence of Judge Burchett was a trait that was admired by many, and it led to his leadership in many areas of his life. He was also admired for his integrity and honesty and for his ability to speak forthrightly.

As a judge he knew when to come down hard on persons who came before him, sometimes including attorneys. But he also believed in giving a second chance when appropriate, and he was able to give many persons another opportunity to become law abiding citizens.

Judge Burchett died suddenly from the dreadful disease of cancer on November 20, 2009 at a hospital in Shreveport. When he died, I lost a true friend, and we all lost an outstanding Judge. Along with his family and many others, I miss him.

On behalf of the Shreveport Bar Association, we submit this memorial to the memory of Judge Dewey E. Burchett, Jr., and move that it be inscribed in the permanent records of the First Judicial District Court, Caddo Parish, Louisiana, and that appropriate copies be presented to his family.

Respectfully submitted on this 28th day of October, 2010 in Shreveport, Caddo Parish, Louisiana.


Graydon K. Kitchens, Jr.