

MEMORIAL FOR  
KATHERINE BRASH JETER  
PRESENTED AT THE MEMORIAL AND RECOGNITION CEREMONY  
HELD IN THE  
FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT  
NOVEMBER 3, 2011  
UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE  
SHREVEPORT BAR ASSOCIATION

Today we honor the life of Katherine Brash Jeter. It is difficult to summarize anyone's life in a few short pages, but when it comes to Kay Jeter, the task becomes formidable. What word portrait captures the essence of Mrs. Jeter? Trailblazer, pathfinder, scholar, actress, historian, lady, steel magnolia – they all come to mind, yet are incomplete. So, let's start at the beginning.

Mrs. Jeter was born on July 24, 1921 in Gulfport, Mississippi, and passed away on May 11, 2011. A 1943 graduate of H. Sophie Newcomb Memorial College of Tulane University, she received her Bachelor of Arts degree in English, and was elected into Phi Beta Kappa.

While in undergraduate school, Mrs. Jeter read law texts to a partially blind law student. She became fascinated with law, and enrolled in Tulane Law School. After serving as Editor-in-Chief of the Tulane Law Review and having been inducted into the Order of the Coif, she graduated in 1945, after only two years.

When Mrs. Jeter began her law career in New Orleans with the law firm of Montgomery, Fenner and Brown, she was one of only a handful of women practicing law in a man's world. The following year, she married one of our own, Robert McLean Jeter, Jr., a member of the Shreveport Bar Association until his death in 1999. Kay was a partner in the law firm of Tucker, Jeter, Jackson and Hickman, L.L.P., and its predecessor firms, for over 50 years until her retirement in 2003.

When Kay came to Shreveport, our local bar association was male dominated. It has been rumored that in those days the bar association's annual meetings were quite memorable --- a cherished tradition that was put in grave jeopardy with the admission of a woman. In a chance meeting on the streets of downtown Shreveport shortly before the annual meeting, the President of the association tried to dissuade Mrs. Jeter from attending by observing that

knowing what a refined lady she was, he was certain that she would not want to attend because the speaker was from South Louisiana and told Cajun jokes. To which Kay impishly retorted "Oh, I love Cajun jokes. I tell them myself." The bar association graciously admitted Mrs. Jeter into full membership -- where in 1986 she served as its first female President.

In addition to the Shreveport Bar Association, Mrs. Jeter was admitted to the Louisiana Bar. She also was admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of the United States of America, the Tax Court of the United States, the U. S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals and all Louisiana Federal District Courts.

The scope of Mrs. Jeter's involvement in the legal world is remarkable. She was a member of the Louisiana State Law Institute for over 20 years, a member of the American Law Institute, a member of the Board of Governors of the Louisiana State Bar Association and a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation. She also served as a member of the Board of Directors of the Shreveport Legal Aid Society and the Caddo-Bossier Legal Aid Society. In 1983 she was the recipient of the Distinguished Graduate Award from the Tulane Law School.

In 1982, Mrs. Jeter earned the distinction of being the first female judge to sit on this Court, the First Judicial District Court in Caddo Parish, Louisiana, serving as Judge Pro Tempore from October of that year until March 1983. She also was selected by the French government to serve as Honorary Consul of France in Shreveport, Louisiana, from 1982 to 1991.

Kay, however, was not motivated by law alone. The breadth of her interests were reflected not only in the myriad news and cultural magazines to which she subscribed, but also by her service in a multitude of community organizations. She was president and member of the League of Women Voters of Shreveport and the YWCA of Shreveport. Kay was named Sustainer of the Year for 1980-81 of the Junior League of Shreveport-Bossier. She was a member of the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Centenary College Muses, the Friends of Louisiana State Exhibit Museum and the Louisiana Historical Association. Kay served as President of the Little Theater of Shreveport, where she also performed in numerous productions. In addition, she served on the Board of Directors of the Shreveport Chamber of Commerce.

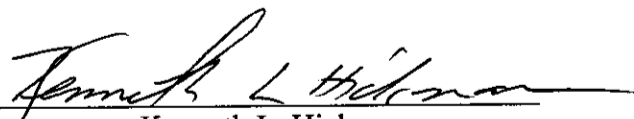
And this is only a partial list of her activities and accomplishments in the legal arena and in our community at large. However, I do not believe that any of these activities interested her as much as her love of history. Kay was the author of several published works. For example, in 1990, she authored a scholarly article about the early maps of Shreveport entitled "Map Mysteries of Shreveport," which was published in the North Louisiana Historical Association Journal. In addition, after many years of extensive research, Mrs. Jeter co-authored a book depicting a snapshot view of Shreveport as it existed in 1850 entitled *Historical Profile - Shreveport 1850*, published in 1982. And for those of you who are aware that ironclad ships were built in Shreveport during the Civil War, I recommend Mrs. Jeter's book, *A Man and His Boat, the Civil War Career and Correspondence of Lieutenant Jonathan H. Carter, CSN*, published in 1996.

As I hope you can discern. Mrs. Jeter was a talented and complex person. Above all she was dignified -- a lady. She had strong interests and an inquiring and capable mind. Mrs. Jeter is an inspiration to us all.

Mrs. Jeter was preceded in death by her husband of 53 years, Robert McLean Jeter, Jr. She is survived by a niece, Patricia L. Griffin, and a nephew, Richard L. Griffin.

On behalf of the Shreveport Bar Association, we submit this memorial to the memory of Katherine Brash Jeter, 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 her family.

Respectfully submitted on this 3rd day of November, 2011, in Shreveport, Caddo Parish, Louisiana.

  
Kenneth L. Hickman-