

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Spence", written over the bottom right corner of the stamp.

MEMORIAL FOR
PAUL ROBARDS MAYER
PRESENTED AT THE MEMORIAL AND RECOGNITION CEREMONY
HELD IN THE
FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT
OCTOBER 28, 2009
UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE
SHREVEPORT BAR ASSOCIATION

May it please the Court:

Paul Robards Mayer was born in Shreveport, La. on February 5, 1920. He died on July 23, 2009 in Baton Rouge, La. at the age of 89.

I met Paul in 1963 and had the good fortune to practice law with him for more than 40 years. He was a member of this bar for sixty-one years. He was a good man, a good husband, a good father, and a good lawyer. He had his priorities in order. His family and home came first in his life. He was curious about things. He wanted to know how they worked. He liked to take things apart and put them back together. He was a tinkerer. When his daughter accidentally broke an antique grandfather clock while running through the house, it was not a disaster. It was an opportunity. He was also one of the most determined, thorough, witty and unique individuals I have ever known.

One considering Paul's life, or the life of any member of his generation, should also consider the times and events through which he lived.

In 1929, when Paul was 9, the depression hit. Because Paul had problems breathing, which the family doctor ascribed to the humidity of Caddo Parish, Paul's father moved the family to Post, Texas where he attempted to grow cotton on dry land. In 1939, when Paul was 19, Germany, and the Soviet Union, invaded Poland. In November of 1941, when Paul was 21, he and Mary Virginia Adsit married. On December 7 Japan bombed Pearl Harbor and the United States

entered World War II. In 1942, when Paul was 22, he enlisted in the U. S. Army. During the War he served in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, France and Belgium. He rose in rank from Private to First Lieutenant. Following the war, he like thousands of other G.I.'s, returned to college. In 1948 Paul received his law degree from The Tulane School of Law.

When I met Paul I was only 23. He was 20 years my senior, married, with three children, owned a house, with a mortgage, had been out of law school 15 years and had fought in WWII. Despite those differences of age and experience, he became my friend, and, without my realizing it at the time, one of my mentors. I learned a lot from Paul. I learned that the practice of law was something to be taken very seriously, that what we, as lawyers, did really affected the life, liberty and property of others; that the practice of law required meticulous preparation, thorough research, meticulous attention to detail, and that its goal was, not the accumulation of wealth, but the service of one's clients.

I need to tell you a few stories about Paul.

As I told you he was very thorough. Automobile cases were a big part of our practice. Many of them involved left turning motorists. Contributory negligence was supposed to have been a complete defense. Paul had tried many cases involving left turning motorists. It seemed that it didn't make any difference whether he had the left turning motorist, the on coming motorist or the over taking and passing motorist. He had lost them every way you could.

He was beginning to believe that he was the subject of a conspiracy. But, as I said, Paul was a very thorough and determined man. So on his own, with no case to defend, he read and re-read every reported case that he could find involving a

left turning vehicle and he schematically diagramed every one of them. The next time he would be ready.

Sure enough he was soon appointed to represent the driver of a left turning vehicle. The case was a complicated one. It not only involved a car which was making a left turn, but a car which was over taking and passing the left turning car, and an on coming car. There were passengers in the cars. As I recall, all of the passengers were plaintiffs and all of the drivers were both plaintiffs and defendants.

Paul, armed with his diagrams, thought, surely, this time, he would be able to convince the court why his client should win. But he lost. The court, relying, on the doctrine of "last clear chance" was able to distinguish all of the cases Paul cited, and, allowed all of the plaintiffs, with the sole exception of the left turning motorist, who it held had the "last clear chance" to avoid the accident to recover. Paul, being a man of good character and wit, accepted the decision with grace. But expression on his face was sort of like that of Coach Spurrier when The Hat faked the field goal in the South Carolina game last year.

Paul liked to fish. And, I suppose, he had seen and admired, the big bass boats with the captain's chair on the front end from which one could operate a trolling motor. Paul had a bass boat and he had a trolling motor, but he did not have one with a captain's chair.

Now many people would have traded their bass boat in on one with a Captain's chair. Paul was not really cheap, but he was a Mayer, he was raised on a farm during the depression, he was a tinkerer who liked to fix things, and he did have this old secretarial chair with a broken wheel.

So he mounted a piece of pipe on the seat at the front of the boat, stuck the swivel of the secretarial chair into the pipe and now he had a bass boat with a captain's chair at the front from which one could operate the trolling motor. The secretarial chair and the pipe did raise the center of gravity of the boat a bit and the chair was not actually fastened in the pipe but a lot of things aren't perfect. Off he and my partner, Sam Smith, went to a lake in Arkansas. We know the boat capsized but the story of exactly what happened was rather difficult to get straight. It seemed that Paul was seated at the motor and tiller at the rear of the boat, Sam was seated in the Captain's chair, leaning over to net a fish, as Paul was turning the boat. It was reported that the chair came out of the pipe, spilling, Sam, the chair, the fishing rods, the tackle boxes, the lunch boxes and, worst of all, the beer, over the side. The chair was never recovered.

Paul had a great sense of humor and a quick wit.

Charlie Mayer, who was our senior partner, became concerned that the partners had become so busy that they rarely had time to visit with one another, so he suggested that all of those of us who were available should have lunch together each Wednesday. We agreed. Brocoto 's on King's Highway, became one of our favorite spots because it had a wonderful soup and salad bar which allowed us to get in, get our lunch, and get back to work without a great delay.

One day, after going through the line at the salad bar, we were all sitting at the table eating, except for our partner Alex Smith. Alex appeared agitated and seemed to be looking for something. Paul, who was busy eating his soup, said to Alex, between spoonfuls of soup: "What are you looking for?" To which Alex, still agitated, said "My soup spoon, I know I picked one up!" Paul replied, just as

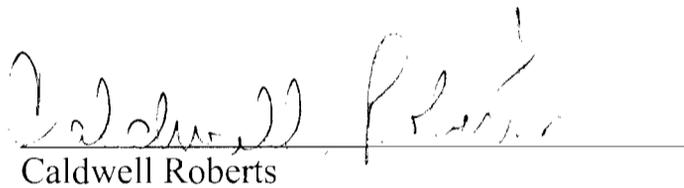
he was about to put another spoonful of soup in to his mouth: “You did. I’ve got it; I’ll be through with it in a minute.”

Paul was survived by his son, Paul Mayer, Jr. of Baton Rouge, La., his daughter, Maryannan Geary of Pass Christian, Miss., and, his son, Guy R. Mayer of Falls Church, Va. and his brother, James R. Mayer, Sr. of Dallas, Tx., and six grandchildren. His wife, Mary Virginia, and their infant daughter, Francis, preceded him in death.

Paul was a great guy. He welcomed me into this city, into his firm and into his family when I was a young man.

I cherish his memory.

Respectfully submitted on this 28th day of October, 2009, in Shreveport, Caddo Parish, Louisiana.


Caldwell Roberts