

SHREVEPORT BAR ASSOCIATION

October 28, 1999

IN MEMORIAM

ROBERT McLEAN JETER, JR.

FILED

OCT 28 1999

CAJUDO PARISH DEPUTY CLERK

MAY IT PLEASE THE COURT:

Robert McLean Jeter, Jr. was born in Shreveport on August 18, 1918. His parents were Robert McLean Jeter, Sr. and Marion Virginia Heame. He died on June 28, 1999, and is survived by Katherine Brash Jeter, his wife of 53 years, and by his brothers, Horace and John.

It is difficult, in the time allotted, to do justice to such a life well lived. Counsel was sought and received from family, law partners, a former secretary and friends of a lifetime. The daily "lunch bunch" were especially helpful. From such a wonderful source of "Bob Jeter stories," a book could be written – but not for today.

After graduation from Byrd High School in 1934, he entered Centenary College at the age of 16. In his early years, he was quite athletic. He loved baseball and he was an excellent golfer.

From 1935 to 1937, he attended Washington and Lee University and it was in 1937, during summer vacation after his junior year, that he was stricken with polio. According to family history, it is probable that he contracted the dread disease while working at his summer job on a family plantation up near Dixie, where polio had struck before. In the course of his lengthy treatment, he spent many months at Warm Springs, Georgia, where he met President Roosevelt. As part of his treatment regime, he underwent surgical treatment in New Orleans and, while he was there, he audited courses at Tulane Law School.

When sufficiently recovered, despite a three-year hiatus, he returned to Washington and Lee, and was graduated in 1941 with a Bachelor of Science degree. In the fall of 1941, he entered Tulane Law School where his academic record was such that he became editor-in-chief of the *Tulane Law Review*. In addition to that signal honor, he was a member of the Order of the Coif and the honorary student leadership fraternity, Omicron Delta Kappa. Bob returned home and began practicing law with the firm of Tucker, Bronson and Martin.

True to his nature, while in law school piling up honors, he did not fail to take notice of Katherine Brash. It is also noteworthy that she succeeded him as editor-in-chief of the *Tulane Law Review*. Romance blossomed and, on May 11, 1946, they were married in the Church of St.-Peter's-By-The-Sea in Gulfport, Mississippi, the same church where her parents were married.

Bob Jeter continued his law practice for the next 55 years, gaining expertise and reputation in his chosen field. In addition to the local, state and national Bar Associations, he was a member of the Louisiana Law Institute, the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel, a fellow of the Louisiana Bar Foundation and the American Bar Foundation. Quite as remarkable as his professional recognition is his record of community service. The list of agencies (and his contribution to their success) is impressive. Over a period of years, he was president of Family and Children's Service Agency; Goodwill Industries; Community Council of Caddo and Bossier; Shreveport Little Theater; Shreveport Bar Association; and the Shreveport Club. He served on the boards of several other agencies, including the Community Chest and, later, the United Fund. One of his crowning achievements was the formation of Community Foundation of Shreveport-Bossier, where he was a founding member, secretary from 1961 to 1979, and chairman from 1979 to 1985. The good work of the Foundation will be a permanent memorial to Bob Jeter

You can't take the measure of a man like Bob if you ignore the fact that his lifetime of achievements were those of a man stricken in the prime of his youth by polio.

How would you describe Bob Jeter to a stranger? The words that spring into my mind are "*indomitable*" and "*invincible spirit*."

His was a life well and arduously lived. A life full of challenge and response. He possessed a droll wit and a sharp mind. And he loved to debate – on any subject – the vagaries of the law, the politics of the moment, the latest best-seller or the quality of certain wines. His sense of humor and gregarious nature will be sorely missed by the host of friends he has left behind. I will miss his usual greeting. “Your Honor . . . how all your writs running?”

Memorials are not made solely from marble or stone. They can be as ephemeral as a passing thought that enriches the moment, bringing a smile or a tear. John Donne,<sup>1</sup> in his *Meditations*, wrote that, “Any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind.” Because so much friendship and love existed, the passing of a man like Bob Jeter causes all of us to be especially diminished.


Before I close, no tribute to *Bob Jeter* would be complete without an added comment about *Kay Jeter*. Aside from her role as wife and life companion, she was a source of support and encouragement and deserves a great deal of credit for the Bob Jeter whose public face all of us met and loved. Kay’s life as the wife of Bob Jeter demonstrates to all who know her a marital ethic of biblical proportions.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *Meditation XVII, the Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* (1624).

<sup>2</sup> King Solomon wrote in Proverb 31 at verses 29-31: “Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all. Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city.”

Your Honors, I move that this memorial be spread upon the minutes of this Court and that copies be sent to members of the family.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Tom Stagg

---

gate."