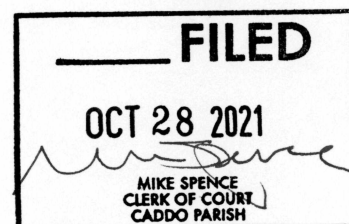


MEMORIAL FOR
JAMES ALBERT VAN HOOK, JR.
PRESENTED AT THE MEMORIAL AND
RECOGNITION CEREMONY
HELD IN THE FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT
OCTOBER 28, 2021
UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE
SHREVEPORT BAR ASSOCIATION

James Albert Van Hook, Jr. was born August 25, 1942 and died this year on the 4th of July. I am honored to be asked to give this memorial. In addition to being one of my favorite people with whom to exchange what we believed to be very astute assessments of any given situation, Jim was my cousin. Jim's dad, Hooker, and my grandmother, Millie Blewer, were first cousins. Being from the deep south, my Dad and the rest of our family referred to Jim as Cousin Jim. However, in these grand proceedings, I will spare you the colloquialism.

The Van Hook family has a long history of excellence in the practice of law in this area, in fact longer than I realized until I was in the process of preparing this memorial. The Van Hook line of fine lawyers in Shreveport commenced with Jim's grandfather, Albert H. Van Hook; continued with Jim's father, Hooker, who was followed by Jim. Continuing that tradition are Jim's son, Acting United States Attorney Alec Van Hook, and his daughter-in-law, Catherine Van Hook, who is in private practice in Baton Rouge. But, as Jim's mother, Betty Neild Van Hook, would insist that I tell you, Jim's lawyer lineage goes back several more generations on her side of the family. Miss Betty's mother was a Land. Jim's great-great grandfather, Thomas Thompson Land served on the Louisiana Supreme Court from 1858-1865. Jim's great-great uncle, Alfred Dillingham Land, served on the Louisiana Supreme Court from 1903-1917. Finally, Jim's great grandfather, John Rutherford Land, served on the Louisiana Supreme Court from 1921-1941. All three of the Land lawyers served as judges on this honorable court prior to their elevation to the Supreme Court. That is quite a lineage. I am pleased to report that there is hope for the Land/Van Hook line of lawyers to continue as Alec's daughter (and my goddaughter), Kate, reports that law school may be in her future.



Jim was educated at Woodberry Forest in Virginia before going to Tulane and Centenary for college. He returned to Tulane for his Juris Doctorate. Jim first practiced with the law firm of Hargrove, Guyton, Van Hook & Ramey and then with the firm of Van Hook, Pesnell and Van Hook (made up of Jim's dad, Billy Pesnell and Jim). After this, Jim's legal career took a somewhat less linear trajectory. He felt the tug and moved his family to Kentucky where he enrolled in and graduated from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. The Van Hooks then returned to Shreveport where Jim continued his practice of law as sole practitioner, sharing office space with his father until Hooker's retirement at the age of 90. They practiced in the family's building on Milam Street where Jim continued to practice until his death.

Jim's career cannot be fully addressed without a discussion of his life as a pastor. In addition to being a full-time lawyer, Jim was also a full-time pastor, serving on the pastoral staff of First United Methodist Church, as the pastor of Ellerbe Road Methodist Church and most recently as the pastor of Belcher Presbyterian Church. Remember, I mentioned that Jim's path was not exactly linear? The same can be said for his denominational affiliations. Jim went to a Baptist seminary, served as a minister in the Methodist church and finally came to his senses, serving a wonderful congregation at Belcher Presbyterian Church. We Presbyterians have a lot of rules and typically like our pastors to be, well, Presbyterian. But Jim worked hard to learn our ways. Presbyterian theology and polity suited him, and he was welcomed warmly into the Presbyterian family by the Presbytery of the Pines, the regional governing body for this area. He is sorely missed by his congregation in Belcher.

For Jim, both the practice of law and his service in the ministry were avocations. Jim's law practice changed after Seminary. He made a concerted effort to move away from the very contentious matters. He spent his lawyering time working with families on estate planning matters. To his clients Jim was a trusted advisor, a confidant and a friend. Often, he became an honorary member of the family. Both his work as a lawyer and a pastor allowed him to use one of his greatest talents which was to allow people to be and feel heard.

If the lawyers among you read your law licenses issued to you by the Louisiana Supreme Court, you will find that it certified that:

after examination by the Examining Committee, [you were] found well and sufficiently qualified to practice as Attorney and Counselor at Law, in the several Courts of this State, and [were] admitted, licensed and sworn accordingly.

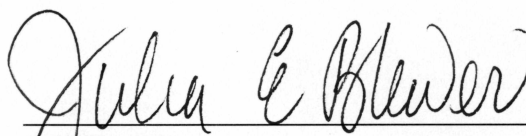
Jim was at his very best when he was in counselor mode. Whether you were a client with a difficult legal matter, a congregant searching for an answer, or a cousin facing his final illness, Jim cleared the deck for you. Everything else fell away. Time was not an issue. He was there for as long as the conversation took. Jim, often along with his wife Sue, was devoted to helping those in crisis.

In addition to two full-time jobs, Jim found time to serve with distinction on the Board of the Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse of Northwest Louisiana (CADA), the Bridge House (which is a halfway house for men in recovery), the Shreveport Downtown Development Agency and the Louisiana Waterworks Museum.

Jim is survived by his wife, Sue, and their blended family including children, James Van Hook, III and his wife, Catherine; Alec Van Hook and his wife, Tricia; Jann Logan and her husband, Stephen; Jill Glover; grandchildren, James and Olivia Van Hook, Kate and John Van Hook, Taylor and Emily Logan, and Brooks Glover; and quite an assortment of cousins.

Your Honors, I move that this memorial be spread upon the minutes of this Court and that copies be submitted to the family of James A. Van Hook, Jr.

Respectfully Submitted,



Julia E. Blewer