

# WRITTEN VERSION

MEMORIAL FOR

ROY L. BEARD

Presented at the Memorial and Recognition Ceremony

Held by the FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

November 3, 2022,

Under the Auspices of the

Shreveport Bar Association

MAY IT PLEASE THE COURT, SYLVIA, AND FAMILY:

On a Saturday morning in March, 1978, I got up to go to the Shreveport Kiwanis Club Pancake Festival because Judge Tom Stagg had given me tickets. My clerkship with Judge Stagg was nearly at its end. I would be moving to Houston to practice with Vinson & Elkins in June.

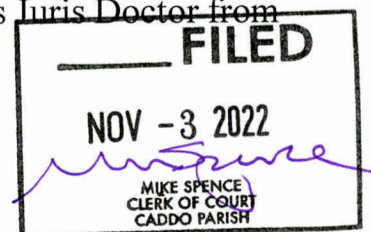
While I was eating pancakes and drinking coffee, Roy L. Beard sat down across from me. He had been Judge Stagg's partner, but I did not know him well.

He wished me well, and then he made a statement that would change my life, "If you ever want to come back to Shreveport, please give me a call."

About a year later, I called Roy Beard. Over Easter weekend, 1979, Roy and I wrote a partnership agreement and I agreed to join his practice. He agreed to have me. The first day of Beard & Arceneaux was August 20, 1979.

Roy was 18 years my senior. He was born on June 15, 1933, in Bogalusa, Louisiana. He died October 8, 2021.

Roy attended Louisiana State University on an academic scholarship and received a Bachelor of Arts degree in government in 1955. At LSU, he was elected president of the Junior Class in the College of Arts & Sciences, a member of the Student Senate, and LSU Student Body President. Roy earned his Juris Doctor from New York University Law School.



Roy was called during law school to serve as a First Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Howitzer Battalion (Artillery) in Germany. He also was also a Captain in the U.S. Army Reserves. After two years of service, he returned to the States to finish his final year of law school.

Roy moved to Shreveport and entered the practice of law with Stagg, Cady, Haygood, and Johnson. He continued in private practice with Stagg, Cady, and Beard; and later Beard, Arceneaux, and Sutherland. He later joined the Peatross Law Firm at United Title of Louisiana.

Roy was admitted to practice law before the United States Supreme Court, as well as the courts of the State of Louisiana. He was a member of the Shreveport Bar Association, the Louisiana State Bar Association, and the American Bar Association. He was an original member and director of the Junior Bar Association (now Young Lawyers Section). He served on the Council of the Shreveport Bar and as Chairman of the Ethics Committee. He also served as a member of the Louisiana State Bar House of Delegates and as a member of the Ethics Committee. He was recognized by the Louisiana State Bar Association for 50 years, and then 60 years, of legal service and practice in good standing.

Roy was elected to the Caddo Parish School Board in 1967. He was Vice-President and served four years on the school board.

Roy Beard was a faithful member of First Baptist Church Shreveport for over 50 years, serving as Chairman of the Board of Directors, Chairman of the Board of Deacons, and Chairman of the Legal Committee. He also served on the Finance Committee, Insurance Committee, and Pastoral Advisory Committee. He was a member of the Phillip Sunday School Class. He also served on the Board of Trustees for First Baptist Church School. He enjoyed reading the Bible, which was a guide to his life.

Roy is survived by his devoted wife of 55 years, Sylvia Marie Brister Beard, his daughter Elizabeth Loretta Beard Deal (David), his daughter Susan Marie Beard Chance (John), grandchildren Andrew David Deal, Jackson Paul Deal, Marie Elizabeth Chance, and John Hoyet Chance, Jr., and brother-in-law Claude Hollis Brister (Jayna).

Somehow, when I joined Roy's law practice, he seemed more mature than his 46 years. He was soft spoken and level-headed, unflappable - a perfect mentor for an impatient, headstrong, even cocky, youngster. He gave me the flexibility to learn litigation and get courtroom experience by representing indigent defendants.

Roy taught me "the ropes." He personally escorted me to the Caddo Parish Clerk of Court's Office. He made it a point to introduce me to the Clerk and, I think, every single deputy clerk. He knew every one of them.

He showed me where to file pleadings and real estate documents, then he showed me how to run a real estate title and create notes for an abstract. These were the "how-to" tasks that we didn't learn in law school, but that were an important part of the everyday practice of law.

He didn't just teach me about law practice.

Roy taught me how to respect the firm's staff, how to treat them with dignity, as valuable members of a team serving the firm's clients, not as subordinates. He was a little formal in addressing the staff ("Mr. Arceneaux," "Ms. Smith"), but completely approachable and genuinely interested in them as people.

He also taught me how to relate to clients. Roy's clients were not insurance companies or Fortune 500 corporations. They were individuals and small family businesses and the families who owned and worked in them.

Roy Beard was the quintessential family's lawyer, a trusted confidante and advisor through the ups and downs of a small business and a family. He didn't just represent the businesses and the families, he cared for them. I think it is fair to say that he loved them. He could advise about tax consequences and contracts, as well as wills and trusts, but he also could help them through family disagreements and difficulties.

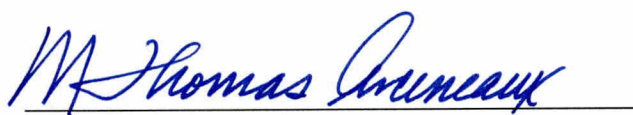
Roy's special expertise was in adoption law. I have no idea how many private adoptions Roy handled, mostly through the Volunteers of America, but every one was special to him. From the compassionate taking of a surrender of an infant for adoption to the joy of obtaining an adoption judgment, children and their parents were Roy's special ministry. He was a prime author of the Louisiana Children's Code.

I learned how to be a lawyer by watching Roy Beard. My clients have been the beneficiaries of that education for the last 40-plus years.

Thank goodness for a pancake festival in March, 1978. That is when Roy Beard reached his generous hand out to me. His generosity toward me continued for the rest of his life. I felt his love and care.

I know Roy's memory, that part of his heart that he deposited in each of us, in Sylvia, Elizabeth, Susan, their children and spouses, in you, and in me, will be part of us forever. Thanks be to God for the life of Roy Beard.

Respectfully submitted,

  
M. Thomas Arceneaux