

**MEMORIAL
HENRY A. POLITZ
FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT
CADDO PARISH, LOUISIANA**

**October 29, 2002
Under Auspices of the
Shreveport Bar Association**

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Carrie A. Dwyer
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HENRY A. POLITZ, known to us as "Hank," was born in Napoleonville, Assumption Parish, Louisiana, on May 9, 1932, and died here on May 25, 2002, at the age of 70. After graduating from Assumption High, Hank attended Nicholls Junior College, now Nicholls State University at Thibodaux. However, his education was interrupted by the Korean War during which he served his country in the United States Air Force. After the war, Henry enrolled at LSU where he received his B.A. in 1958 and his law degree, with honors, in 1959. While at Law School, he served as editor of the Law Review; was voted outstanding law graduate 1958-59 by his classmates, and was honored by induction into the school's two (2) main honor societies, Omicron Delta Kappa (ODK) and Order of the Coif.

Hank moved to Shreveport upon graduation from Law School, with wife Jane and four (4) of their eventual eleven (11) children, to begin his law practice with the law firm of Booth, Lockard, Jack, Pleasant & LeSage. He became a partner with the firm in 1962 and was the managing partner when he was appointed by then President Jimmy Carter as a judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in July 1979.

With the Booth Lockard law firm, Hank soon earned a reputation as a highly principled and vigorous trial lawyer—a reputation that grew from local to statewide. He was named Outstanding Young Lawyer in Louisiana in 1971. He served as president of the Louisiana Trial Lawyers Association and president of the Shreveport Bar Association. He served seven (7) years as a member, including a year as

chairman, of the Committee on Professional Responsibility (Ethics) of the Louisiana Supreme Court, member of the House of Delegates and Board of Governors of the Louisiana State Bar Association; and a member of the Louisiana Judiciary Commission, to name a few.

Hank had a great deal of professional interest in the delivery of legal services to the poor and middle class. He was former chairman and board member of the Caddo-Bossier Legal Aid Society, the forerunner to the local legal services corporation. Henry gained national recognition as the father of the "Shreveport Plan," the prototype for this country's prepaid legal services plans. It has been said, and rightly so, that some of his finest hours were spent in this endeavor, particularly in light of the fact that current data from the American Prepaid Legal Services Institute shows that twenty-two (22) million Americans representing forty-three (43%) percent of the United States population are presently covered by at least one (1) legal services plan.

Henry further immersed himself in countless civic, political, educational, religious and philanthropic endeavors in this his adopted community.

On August 10, 1979, he commenced his service on the United States Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. He was Chief Judge of the Fifth Circuit from 1992 through 1999, the only native-born Louisianian to hold that distinction. With a continued interest in ethics matters, he served six (6) years on the Committee on Codes of Conduct of the Judicial Conference of the United States, the national ethics committee for all federal judicial offices and employees. Judge Politz then served for two (2) years on the Judicial Conference Committee charged with reviewing actions taken by Circuit Judicial Councils in judicial misconduct matters. From 1992 to 1999 he was a member of the Judicial Conference of the United States, the governing body of the federal court system, and Judge Politz served on its prestigious Executive


Committee from 1996-1999. Even though he took senior status in the summer of 2000, he maintained a full caseload until his death, sitting not only with the Fifth Circuit but also with other circuits around the nation.

A line in Hank's obituary read: "Any account of the life of Henry A. Politz would be incomplete without mention of his remarkable sense of humor." No truer statement could have been written. He had developed a national reputation as a humorist and raconteur and was sought after as a program and dinner speaker. He effectively used that humor to engage, disarm and deflect throughout his career as trial lawyer and circuit judge. He entertained us, yes, but he continuously challenged us as lawyers about professionalism and ethics and equal access to justice. We revered and respected Hank for his humanity, his empathy for the disadvantaged and for all who might get shortchanged from the justice system. His unswaying dedication to justice and the rule of law was his hallmark.

Hank and Jane Politz had eleven (11) children. Three (3) are lawyers and two (2) are members of the Shreveport Bar Association.

On behalf of the Shreveport Bar Association, we submit this Memorial of the life and times of Henry A. Politz and formally move that it be inscribed in the official records of the First Judicial District Court, Caddo Parish, Louisiana, and certified copies thereof be presented to the family.

Respectfully submitted this 29th day of October, 2002.



Joseph C. LeSage, Jr.
For the Committee