

IN MEMORIAM

JAMES EDWIN BAILEY, JR.

HONORABLE JUDGES OF THIS COURT: MR. PRESIDENT:
MEMBERS OF THE BAR: LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

The real tragedy of death all too often is that it requires the occurrence to assess the full measure of our loss. So it has been with our friend Ed Bailey.

James Edwin Bailey, Jr. was born April 19, 1910 in Vivian, Louisiana. He attended the public schools in Caddo Parish. In 1934 on one of the very best days of his life, he married Alberta Nelson of Oklahoma. Thereafter, and with Alberta's assistance, he completed his law education at Louisiana State University in 1938 and received his degree. He practiced law in Shreveport until his death on January 21, 1982.

There is no recognized formula for setting a value on what a man has been. All too often the shallowest of standards is invoked. An inventory of worldly goods is totaled and syrupy editorials appear in the newspapers mourning the irreplaceable loss to the community. There is a little of the temptation to deify wealth in all of us.

But Ed's death made me acutely conscious of another formula, one I offer to you today. Perhaps the best index of what a man was is what his family thought of him. After all what can a man really conceal from members of his own household? His wife and children share his frustrations, his disappointments, his successes. They alone know the extent of his generosity because they alone know how much he has to give of himself and his things. A community may be barred from learning of the smallness and meanness of a man because all too often family pride protects his image but these traits in a man can never be concealed from his family. The shiny veneer of social charm cracks easily and often in the role of husband and father. I can think of no more cruel and exacting portrait of a man than the one painted in the deep unuttered recesses of his family's memories.

If this is a valid statement of life, our friend and companion, James Edwin Bailey, Jr. was a giant among men. It has been my pleasure to know his family; never, never have I seen a man more esteemed and genuinely loved by his wife and children than was Ed. And to their everlasting credit, they reflected it in life as much as in death, because the glow of Ed's love for his family was returned with such warmth and genuineness that Ed's good humor never flagged and the ravages of sickness and the sting of death battled helplessly against a genuinely contented man.

A longtime member of this bar and a man who loved Ed Bailey is Leonard Lockard. He serves as a member of my committee and gave me his thoughts about Ed's passing. The words were too genuine and sweet to change and I give you Leonard's thoughts. This is what he wrote.

Hearing, that our colleague Ed Bailey had left us, someone who had seriously entertained the idea of compiling an anthology of the singular and the amusing incidents involving the Bar during the last two generations said dolefully "But how can this be done now that Ed is gone."

Ed was the cistern or depository of these incidents and the fount of much of them.

Of all the people of the Bar in our time possibly with no exception Ed Bailey had the rare trait of sociability. He moved in, around and among his fellows, touching and contacting many and lubricating the whole. When I saw Ed Bailey approaching I always experienced anticipation of a pleasant contact. Always there was warmth or at least a knowing wink of the eye in passing, and often a slowing of the pace to recount a non-malicious tid-bit touching someone or more of our fellows.

Much can be said for the determined, preoccupied, strictly business egocentric. We have them and they are usually successful, but it is a selfish success. Suppose we were all like that. We are blessed when we have a counter weight and Ed Bailey was such.

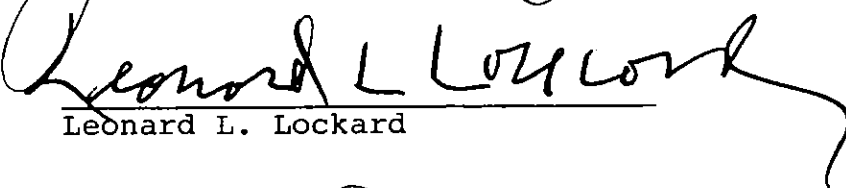
Ed had a sense of the comic and the comic is always a solvent to tension. Laugh and the world laughs with you with visceral benefit to each. Ed added greatly to the merriment of our times.

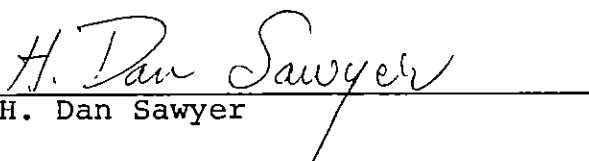
Not suprisingly, Judge Dan Sawyer, another member of this committee, wrote the same type of comment. "Ed was one of the few people with whom I was completely comfortable," he said. "He was always such a pleasure to be around. One always felt better after a moment or two in his presence."

Ed is survived by his widow, Alberta Nelson Bailey and four children, James Edwin Bailey, III of Greenwood, Louisiana, Ney Ann Bailey of Highland, California, Brenda Bailey Owen of Winnetka, Illinois, and Kim Bailey Clingman of Keithville, Louisiana. He is also survived by an army of friends who will not soon forget him.

BY THE COMMITTEE:


James J. Thornton, Jr.


Leonard L. Lockard


H. Dan Sawyer