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SHREVEPORT BAR ASSOCIATION
MEMORIAL EXERCISES BEFORE THE
FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT
Caddo Parish, Louisiana

October 27, 1986

MEMORIAL HONORING JOHN A. "JACK" DYKES

A Shreveport Journal editorial, published shortly after Jack Dykes' death, said this about him:

Jack Dykes succeeded in his professional business life as an oilman and attorney. He will probably be remembered best, however, for his dedication to improving Shreveport's government, its business atmosphere, and its civic culture.

As Chairman of the committee that hammered out the new form of city government, Dykes was relentless in bringing about a more equitable system . . .

Because of his leadership, our city's problems indeed are aired more openly now, and in a manner that reflects more mutual respect and understanding among our citizens, black and white. This is the sort of legacy that men and women of goodwill leave us.

John Atkins "Jack" Dykes was born on December 25, 1919, in Shreveport, Louisiana, the son of Mrs. Miriam Atkins Dykes and the late Osborne Jefferson Dykes. He died on October 30, 1985, having lived all his life in Shreveport.

Jack attended the University of Alabama, graduating with a B. A. degree in 1939. He then entered Tulane Law School, but his education was interrupted by World War II. He entered military service on December 22, 1941. He was an O.S.S. officer during the war, and was discharged with the rank of Major after serving in the China-Burma-India Theatre. He

returned to Tulane Law School and graduated in 1947, having been honored as a member of the Order of the Coif.

He entered private law practice in Shreveport in 1947, and continued until 1959, when he went into the oil and gas business. For many years he was associated with Lyons Petroleum, Inc., and at the time of his death, was a partner in Pritchett and Dykes of Lafayette and Shreveport.

His civic honors and memberships were numerous. He served as President or Chairman of the Committee of 100, the Shreveport City Government Study Committee, the Shreveport Junior Chamber of Commerce, the Guild of Lay Readers of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Traveler's Aid Society, Goodwill Industries, and the Shreveport Country Club. He served as First Vice President of the Shreveport Chamber of Commerce and as Vice President of the Shreveport Bar Association. He was on the Board of Directors of the American Red Cross and the Shreveport Metropolitan YMCA. He served on the Federal Energy Advisory Committee and was a member of the Louisiana Bar Association, the Mid-Continent Oil and Gas Association, Independent Petroleum Association of America, and the Louisiana Association of Independent Producers and Royalty Owners. He was a member of the Shreveport Country Club, the Shreveport Club, Pierremont Oaks Tennis Club, Petroleum Club of Lafayette and the Quiet Birdmen. For many years he was recognized as a championship flight golfer, and greatly enjoyed piloting his own airplane.

Jack Dykes showed an early interest in the civic and political affairs of the community. After graduation from law school, he became an active member of the Shreveport Junior Chamber of Commerce, eventually becoming Jaycee President. In 1953, he was named Young Man of the Year.

Although he was a member of a prominent and well placed Shreveport family, he did not hesitate to speak out when he thought changes were in order, even when those changes might be considered "anti-establishment." In a speech as President of the Jaycees, he took the local banking community to task for a failure to establish oil and gas lending departments. Not long afterwards, several local banks established such departments. He spoke out for slum clearance when it was an unpopular cause among many of his peers, and served as campaign manager for the candidacy for Governor of a New Orleans Catholic, at a time when many Shreveporters were not ready for such a departure from the traditional.

Jack Dykes served as attorney for the Shreveport Fire and Police Civil Service Board in the 1950s, and became recognized as an authority in the field of Louisiana civil service law. This activity sparked an already keen interest in local government, an interest that would later be a source of one of his greatest achievements.

In 1971, he served as Chairman of J. Bennett Johnston's campaign for governor, a race which the relatively unknown State Senator nearly won. In 1972, Dykes was Manager and Finance Chairman for Bennett Johnston's successful campaign for the United States Senate.

In 1977, Mayor Calhoun Allen appointed a citizens committee, known as the Shreveport City Charter Study Committee, whose purpose was to consider a new form of government for the City. The committee was a large, diverse group, representing all segments of Shreveport. Jack was elected chairman of the committee.

Jack had to call upon a vast reservoir of patience and knowledge to lead the committee to its consensus in designing a new City Charter.

Additionally, he brought to this assignment a keen intellect combined with a gentleman's consideration of the views of others. The Charter changed the form of government from the commission form, which had been in effect since 1910, to a strong Mayor-Council form. After the commission had done its work and the Charter was adopted, Dykes joined in the campaign to have the citizens adopt the Charter. On May 13, 1978, the citizens overwhelmingly voted in favor of the new form of city government.

It has been said that the new City Charter itself is a significant memorial to Jack Dykes.

Jack was living proof that one dedicated man can make a difference for the common good. Not only did he use his legal talent to bring about change in the form of government, he gave his time, money, advice, and inspiration to promising candidates for political office - a cause that attracted his attention throughout his adult life. Jack Dykes loved Shreveport as few men have. His affection for the City was deeply felt and his dedication to it was unselfish. Our community is a better place to live because of him.

Jack Dykes is survived by his widow, Rosemary Bulling Dykes, his mother, Miriam Atkins Dykes, a son, David P. Dykes, a daughter Sally (Mrs. Steve) Smith, four grandchildren, Abigail and Sara Dykes and Annie Elise and Stephen Hunter Smith, two brothers, O. J. "Jeff" Dykes, Jr., and James F. "Jim" Dykes, both of Shreveport, and numerous nieces and nephews. He is also survived by a host of friends who remember him for his significant contributions to our City.

Respectfully submitted,

JAMES C. GARDNER

JOHN B. HUSSEY

JOHN M. MADISON, JR.