

In Memoriam

JOHN BENNETT FILES

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Presented at the Annual Memorial Service  
Conducted by the Shreveport Bar Association  
in the First Judicial District Court  
Thursday, November 18, 1954

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The following biographical Memorial is respectfully presented in memory of John Bennett Files, who departed this life at his home in Shreveport on September 17, 1954:

John Bennett Files was born on November 7, 1878, at Files Valley, situated near Itasca in Hill County, Texas. His parents, James Luther Files and Mrs. Augusta Bennett Files, were from South Carolina and had settled in Texas in an earlier year.

John Bennett Files, or John B. Files, as he was familiarly known, attended Austin College at Sherman, Texas, where he was awarded his A. B. degree, and the University of Texas, Austin, where he received the degree of LL. B. He was admitted to the Bar in Louisiana in the year 1902, and began his practice in Shreveport.

On December 31, 1904, John B. Files was married to Miss Helene Wadley of Shreveport, at the First Methodist Church in this city. Of the marriage, two children were born, Helene, now Mrs. John R. Palmer, and Sylvia, now Mrs. Edward F. Neild, Jr., both of Shreveport. He is survived by his wife and daughters, five grandchildren, and a number of nieces and nephews.

John B. Files was a lifelong member of the Presbyterian Church. He had been a Deacon of the First Presbyterian Church in Shreveport until he retired in that capacity to become an Elder in that Church. At the time of his death,

he was a member of its Board of Trustees and a Presiding Elder.

John B. Files had the knack of living in the active present, but without once surrendering to the confusions and tensions of the day, which have impressed the lives of so many. His was the philosophy of the measured pace, never idle, yet never flurried, and the volume of his accomplishments is a testimonial to the worth of his unremitting, unhurried approach to life.

He had faith, and a steadfast devotion based on faith. He had cheerfulness that was inexhaustible, and a sense of humor arising from cheerfulness. But, perhaps most fundamental of all, he had an innate kindness, deep-grained and unfailing.

His sparkling humor enlivened many a courtroom proceeding and friendly conversation. The way ahead was never so dark or barren but that he would discern in it the material for a smile, and he had the capacity to pass on to others the pleasant knowledge of his discovery.

Here among his home folks, the members of his family, the members of the Court and of the Bar Association to which he belonged for more than half a century, and his fellow residents of the City of Shreveport, it is fitting that we mark and remember his friendliness. It was a quality which recognized no distinction of age: he was the friend of the old and the young; among those who attended the rites in the Chapel of the First Presbyterian Church were many who had been friends with him since his early manhood, and it was a young lawyer who said recently, "I only met Mr. Files two or three times, but you know how he was - if you talked with him once you felt that you were friends."

John B. Files was a lawyer in the classic tradition, in that he did not turn aside to any other occupation. He practised law in Shreveport actively and steadily for fifty-two years. During his long career he had practised both individually and in partnership, his last partnership affiliation being with the late Thomas C. Barret, who died in 1922. His experience as a trial lawyer and as a legal counselor was broad and varied. He had the adaptability of the veteran trial lawyer to the environment of the lowest and highest courts of the State and Federal systems. He handled with ease, and with the same

relaxed and cheerful attitude, the abstruse and the simple, and neither the threat of defeat nor the imminence of victory could impair his effectiveness or shake his calm. He was a most facile pleader and a resourceful advocate.

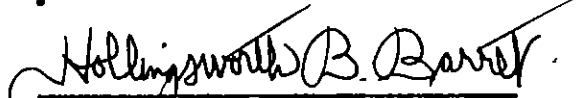
It would not be feasible to attempt to separate the devotion which he gave to family, church, and profession, for in his philosophy they harmonized, and together filled the years. He was a philosopher who did not speak of philosophy, but who lived it. He lived it in all the relations of churchman, husband, father, grandfather, friend, and practicing lawyer.

As John B. Files had accepted life with unwavering faith throughout all his years, had he been foretold of God's summons, it would have found him ready with the faith and acceptance of these lines:

"So be my passing.  
My task accomplished and the long  
day done,  
My wages taken, and in my heart  
Some late lark singing,  
Let me be gathered to the quiet west,  
The sundown splendid and serene."

Special Committee Appointed by  
Shreveport Bar Association:

  
Robert L. Garrett, Chairman

  
Hollingsworth B. Barret

  
N. B. Carstarphen