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IN MEMORIAM

JOSEPH HENRY STEPHENS

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In the American scheme of things, it falls to the judiciary to exercise, in part, the powers universally an attribute of the Great Judge above. In the carrying out of these powers, necessarily vested in imperfect man over imperfect humanity for the preservation of the rights of mankind in general, it is essential that the incumbent of the judicial office be vested not merely with learning, but with a feeling of sympathy to humanity, of humility and, above all, with real common sense. These qualities Judge Stephens possessed to a degree rarely equalled by an incumbent of a trial court in Louisiana, even in the First Judicial District Court which has been blessed traditionally with the highest character of Judges.

Joseph Henry Stephens was born in Natchitoches Parish on April 10th, 1883. He received his academic education at the Louisiana State Normal, and at the Louisiana State University, graduating in law from Tulane University. He was admitted to the bar in 1907, and very shortly thereafter came to Shreveport where he engaged in private practice until the first World War.

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Harry Stephens volunteered for service in the United States Army in 1917, and through his ability and courage rose, in the field, to the rank of Captain. At the termination of the war, he received his honorable discharge, and returned to Shreveport to his private law practice, which was always a modest one. In 1920, he was appointed by Governor Pleasant to fill an unexpired term on the bench of the First Judicial District Court. To the surprise of the great majority of the bar - though not to his personal friends - Judge Stephens immediately displayed a wonderful aptitude for the discharge of judicial duties. This surprise generally, in all probability, was due to the fact that his private practice was so small and of such an unassuming nature that his ability was not generally recognized. The fact that his practice was of this limited character was probably due to modesty on his part: a quality mistakenly taken to be one of ineptitude rather than to a retiring nature.

The ability displayed by Judge Stephens led to his choice at each subsequent reelection, so that he occupied the office of District Judge for Caddo Parish for twenty-three consecutive years, retiring on October 1st, 1943, on account of physical disability.

In addition to his service as District Judge, Judge Stephens also sat upon the Court of Appeal of the Second Circuit, where he was the Presiding Judge, under

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appointment by the Supreme Court of the State, for a period of some sixteen months. His record as an appellate judge equalled that as a trier of contested cases.

Judge Stephens was married in 1911 to Miss Edna Williams of Natchitoches. To this marriage was born a daughter, now Mrs. Jacqueline Ludlam, of Wichita Falls, Texas, and two sons, Hugh M. Stephens, an attorney of the Shreveport Bar, who, like his father, has had a distinguished military career, and Joseph Henry Stephens, Jr., now a law student at Louisiana State University.

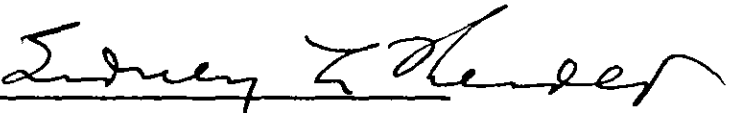
It may be said of Judge Stephens that he possessed, in an unusual degree, the faculty of ascertaining the truth, of looking through fraud and pretense, whether in witness, litigant or lawyer, as well as the rare lodestone whereby judges may find the essential justice of causes regardless of petty technicalities. To Harry Stephens, as Judge, it made not the slightest difference whether a lawyer was the veriest tyro, just out of law school, or a big shot, looking down his nose at his young lawyer opponent.

The family of Harry Stephens has just cause to be proud of his character and achievements; and we know that we bespeak the feeling of the entire bar when we express the hope that his sons, in their choice of his chosen profession, may emulate the high standards

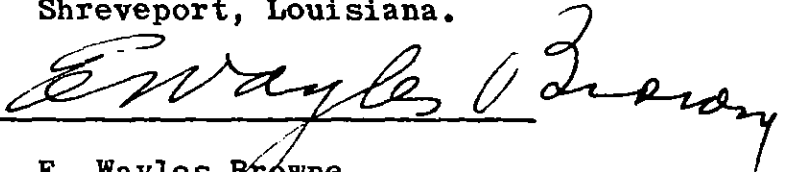
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and ideals with which he discharged his duty to that profession, and to the public whom he served.

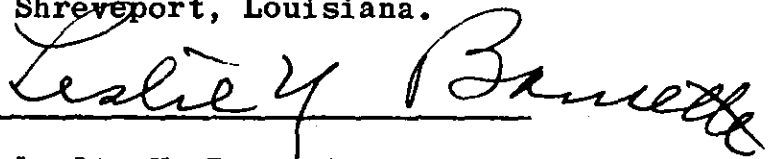
It is respectfully requested that this resolution be spread upon the records of the First Judicial District Court, so that the memory of Judge Stephens, and the respect of the bar, be there permanently recorded.



Sidney L. Herold, Chairman
Slattery Building,
Shreveport, Louisiana.



E. Wayles Browne
Giddens Lane Building,
Shreveport, Louisiana.



Leslie Y. Barnette
Giddens Lane Building,
Shreveport, Louisiana.

Committee of the Shreveport Bar
Association to memorialize the
late Judge Joseph Henry Stephens.