

MEMORIAL

FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

ALONZO CURTIS DAVID

CADDO PARISH, LOUISIANA

BORN: October 4, 1903

DIED: April 26, 1995

Alonzo Curtis David was born October 4, 1903, on Clifty Creek, near Eureka Springs, Arkansas. His parents were Alma Elizabeth Finn David and Silas Green David. A. C. was the second child of a family of six children: four boys and two girls. His father was a farmer and a blacksmith. He also served on the county school board. His mother, in addition to helping in the field, took care of the children, cooked, washed clothes, cleaned house, kept a garden, chickens, and a cow.

Even as a child, A. C. was a gentle person by nature, which was evident in in his demeanor. His mother affectionately called him "Little Lon." As a child he attended a one-room country school which was three miles from home. All of the students walked to school together, and there were great times of conversation, practical pranks, and the formation of deep and lasting friendships.

Later, the family moved into Eureka Springs, and A. C. attended W. H. Reid High School, from which he graduated in 1925. In the late summer and early fall of his high school years, his father would take A. C. and his three brothers to Kansas where they worked in the wheat harvests. W. H. Reid High School still has an annual reunion of alumni.

A. C. went to the reunion many times, but whether or not he was able to go, he always sent his dues. He was very proud of his school.

After graduating, A. C. and his brother Wesley went to St. Louis, Missouri. They used money they had saved from the wheat harvests.

A. C. wanted to study law and Wesley wanted to become a banker. Supporting themselves with part time jobs, they attended and graduated from Dixon's College of Business.

A. C. then came to Shreveport. He rented a room at the Y.M.C.A. and got a job as a clerk. A short time later he had to be hospitalized to have his tonsils removed. He was a patient at the North Louisiana Sanitarium. Miss Grace Prichard was a senior nursing student at the time, and was the senior nurse on duty. When she went into A. C.'s room to check on him, he was so shy that he pulled the covers up under his chin. Apparently it was love at first sight, at least as far as Miss Grace Prichard was concerned, because when she emerged from his room, she announced to the other nurses that she was "going to marry the man in Room 212." They were married February 8, 1932.

Because of the depression, A. C. and Grace moved to Arkansas to live with A. C.'s parents. He helped on his father's farm. While there, their first child was born, a son, Val Howard David.

Some months later they moved to Minden, Louisiana, and lived with Miss Grace's family. Leaving Grace in Minden, A. C. came to Shreveport to seek employment. He found work as a bookkeeper at Hutchinson's Brothers Jewelers, which was located across the street from the courthouse, where we are meeting. He worked for Hutchinson's several years. He also sold life insurance. One night while collecting his debits, he was robbed at gun point. Miss Grace's comment was, "To hell with that, A. C. - find another job!" His brother Wesley was in Houston, and urged A. C. to come there and find "a good job." The trouble was, of course, that things were tough all over the country. After a few months, they moved back to Shreveport.

About this time, their second child was born, a daughter, Patricia Ann. A. C. was now working for Roby Furniture. He became a Notary Public. Three years later, another daughter was born, Nancy Ruth. He next became employed by United Gas. During all those years, A. C. had never given up his dream of becoming a lawyer. Now, with regular income and regular working hours, he could pursue his dream. He enrolled in night courses at Centenary College. He read and studied the law under Percy Garrett and Joseph Jackson, two well known Shreveport attorneys. He also enrolled in the LaSalle Extension University and obtained a degree from them in 1944.

In the summer of 1944 he traveled to New Orleans, where he took and passed the state bar exam. He was away overnight and the children tell me it was the only night he ever spent away from Miss Grace in their 59 years of married life. He was admitted to the State Bar on July 26, 1944, and introduced to his home court, the First Judicial District, Caddo Parish, on October 7, 1944.

While A. C. continued to work for United Gas, he also began to do what he could to practice law on the side. But, as we in the profession know, the law is a jealous mistress. She demands all of your time, attention and talent. About a year after his admission to the bar, he was able to hang out his shingle in the Ricou-Brewster Building. He kept books for Mr. Hugh Snead in exchange for the use of one of his vacant offices.

In another year he found that he needed more office space, and he did something unheard of at that time. He moved out of downtown, away from the Courthouse and into a neighborhood business district known as "West End." His new office was located at 1875½ Texas Avenue. It was upstairs, over the West End Branch of the Commercial National Bank.

A. C. stayed there until he quit practicing law in 1987. When he opened this office, Miss Grace became the secretary and moving power behind the throne. In this setting, they practiced law together for 43 years.

I can recall visiting in their home 40 years ago as a college student.

Almost every night after supper, Mr. David went back to the office where he would work until 10:00, 10:30 or 11:00 P.M. Many times, because the girls needed the car, they took him to the office on their way to their appointment, and then picked him up on the way home.

I can recall numerous occasions when there would be animated exclamations by Miss Grace about the way some opposing party had treated one of their clients. She would clench her fist, shake it, and give vivid and explicit descriptions of what she would like to do to the other side. Occasionally, one of the girls would remark, "The wrong one got to be the lawyer."

On those occasions Mr. David would smile and gently shake his head, but always there was a gleam of admiration in his eye for Miss Grace and for her support for him as he had to try to unravel a difficult knot of law or fact, or both.

So, what do we say about our friend and departed brother at the bar?

I. We say:

Do not measure him by those who run on the fast track, who are the giants and high profile members of the Bar. He never aspired to that way of life.

II. We say:

Measure him by what he did:

A. He and Miss Grace were ordinary, everyday, hard-working people. He represented ordinary, everyday, hard-working people of all races, people who were in the everyday throes of life and with a need for excellent work with:

- 1) The purchase of a home,
- 2) Adoptions,
- 3) Contracts of various kinds,
- 4) Wills and successions,
- 5) Traffic, criminal and juvenile matters.

He always tried to help young people see that they were responsible and accountable for their actions. A good life was to be realized by a good person who worked, behaved and was a good family member and a good citizen.

- 6) Mr. David had his own private legal aid, indigent defender, and pro bono projects long before such terms were bandied about by the Bar. He once told me that he thought that to the degree individual lawyers were unwilling to help the disadvantaged for free, to that same degree the Bar would suffer in its esteem before the public.

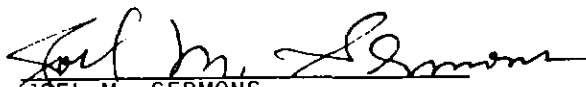
III. And finally, we say:


Measure him and Miss Grace by the American Dream. He was 42 years of age when he passed the bar. There were 22 years of patient hard work and waiting to reach the dream of being a lawyer. Remember his humility and his thanksgiving after the first accomplishment as he served to help to better human relations.

We miss him. We miss Grace. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to the family and friends.

We move the Court to grant the filing of this Memorial in the archives and have copies sent to the members of the family.

Respectfully submitted,


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