

MEMORIAL
JAMES J. THORNTON, JR.
FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT
CADDO PARISH, LOUISIANA
OCTOBER 30, 2001
Under Auspices of the
SHREVEPORT BAR ASSOCIATION

FILED

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James J. Thornton, Jr., known to us as "Jim," was born in Shreveport, Louisiana, on February 16, 1931, and died here on March 4, 2001, at the age of 70. He graduated from Byrd High School where he excelled in debate. In the summer prior to his senior year in high school he was a delegate to the American Legion-sponsored Boys State at Louisiana State University, where he was selected as the Outstanding Citizen. He was an officer of his high school senior class and won a debate scholarship to Baylor University. While attending Baylor he was a ranking finalist in the National Inter-Collegiate Debate Championship Tournament and won the Pat M. Neff award as the outstanding debater in 1950. He pressed four years of college study into three years, earning his Bachelor's Degree in political science in 1950.

In 1950 he was awarded a research fellowship by Vanderbilt University and received his Master's Degree in political science there in 1952. He then traveled cross country to UCLA for a teaching fellowship before serving in the United States Army for two years during the Korean Conflict. After completing his military service he entered Tulane Law School where he was an Associate Editor of the Tulane Law Review, became a member of the prestigious Order of the Coif, and represented his law school in the national moot court competition. He graduated third in the 1959 class.

He returned to Shreveport ten years after his graduation from Byrd and became an associate with the firm of Morgan, Baker, Skeels, Middleton & Coleman. Shortly thereafter, largely at the urging of Leonard L. Lockard, he

joined the firm of Booth, Lockard, Jack, Pleasant & LeSage, becoming a partner in 1962. Five years later he joined with Bennett Johnston, Sr., and Bennett Johnston, Jr., forming the legal partnership first known as Johnston, Johnston & Thornton, and then Johnston & Thornton. He practiced law in that setting until 1985 when he became a sole practitioner. He fully retired from the practice of law in the year 2000.

During the 1980's and 1990's Jim taught courses at the Barksdale Air Force Base campus of Louisiana Tech and at LSUS. In 1986 he directed a program for college students from Latin America and the Caribbean Basin sponsored by the Agency for International Development, an arm of the United States State Department. The exercise in the democratic process which he developed for these students became a model for other programs, resulting in numerous commendations from the State Department.

The law and teaching obviously were close to Jim's heart but his most intense literary focus was on writing. He wrote long and strong. His many briefs, in state and federal courts and at all court levels, are testaments to that compelling interest, but the most persuasive evidence is his authorship of two novels.

In 1982 his novel, A Matter of Sweet Revenge, was published. The story involves a survivor of Auschwitz who kills his former Nazi torturer and is duly charged and tried. The defense advanced was legal insanity. The book doubles as an historical reference and a piercing study of the insanity plea.

In 1999, after countless hours of study of the Warren Commission Report and all other available records and data, Jim wrote The Patsy. It has been said that when Jack Ruby murdered Lee Harvey Oswald he closed one door on the mystery surrounding the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. It may accurately be suggested that Jim's The Patsy opens another door. In Jim's fictional account

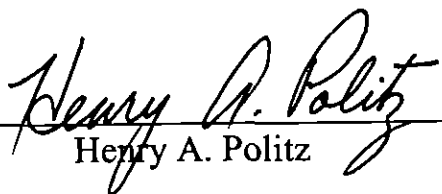
Oswald is not killed but, instead, he is tried for the death of President Kennedy. The prosecution and defense teams are very able trial attorneys. The prosecution, with quintessential honesty, puts forth all of the available evidence. The defense, as was its responsibility, attacks the inconsistencies in the evidence and probes relentlessly for the truth. The Patsy raises intriguing questions and has been described as a "gripping read."

Jim was a member of the Shreveport, Louisiana, and American Bar Association, as well as the American Trial Lawyers Association and the very prestigious International Academy of Trial Lawyers.

Jim is survived by his wife of 44 years, Louise Taylor Thornton, and their two lawyer daughters, Mary B. Thornton of Fort Worth, Texas, and Julia H. Thornton of Baton Rouge. Jim was very proud of both of them.

On behalf of the Shreveport Bar Association we submit this brief Memorial of the life and times of JAMES J. THORNTON, JR., and formally move that it be inscribed in the official records of the First Judicial District Court, Caddo Parish, Louisiana, and that certified copies thereof be presented to Louise, Mary, and Julia.

Respectfully submitted this 30th day of October.


Henry A. Politz