

**MEMORIAL FOR  
SYDNEY B. NELSON  
PRESENTED AT THE MEMORIAL AND RECOGNITION CEREMONY  
HELD IN THE FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT  
NOVEMBER 3, 2022  
UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE SHREVEPORT BAR ASSOCIATION**

MAY IT PLEASE THE COURT, GAIL, AND FAMILY:

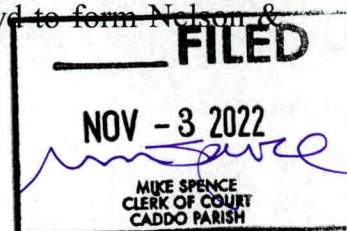
I first met Syd when I interviewed as a senior law student with Pugh & Nelson at the LSU Law Center. I had previously interviewed with several other firms, but upon meeting Syd I immediately understood that he was a truly extraordinary individual, and from that day until Syd died on January 10, 2022, my respect and admiration for Syd as a lawyer, public servant, business partner, family man and friend never waned in the least. Syd's deep and abiding faith in God, love for his family and community, his commitment to truth, and his unfailing grace to everyone he encountered exemplifies Christ's admonition that we are to be "a good and faithful servant."

Syd's character and courage that led him to be consistently recognized as "the Conscience of the Senate" from 1980 through 1992 may be encapsulated in the following story from the floor of the Louisiana Senate:

Syd was standing at the podium arguing against the passage of a particular bill, not philosophically, but because the bill needed to be reworked and redrafted so as to be written more precisely. At that point one of the other senators interrupted Syd's precise explanation of the faults in that bill and proclaimed, "Excuse me, Senator Nelson, you don't really need to convince us of how poorly written this bill is; we all know it's a really poorly drafted bill. However, there is a big difference between you and the rest of us down here: You expect good government while the rest of us are satisfied with pretty good government."

Syd was born on March 12, 1935, the second son of George G. Nelson and Eunice Lilly Young Nelson. He grew up in Benton and demonstrated the character and commitment to others that would be the hallmark of a life lived truly well. He was an Eagle Scout and Valedictorian before attending the University of Oklahoma where he received a Bachelor of Business Administration Degree. He held an ROTC Navy scholarship and was highly involved in campus activities before serving in the United States Navy as a lieutenant on the destroyer, USS Sarsfield. It was during that service that he met and married a Georgia peach, Gail Anderson Nelson. Their union of 64 years was a blessing not only to one another but to the communities that they served together and through the many friends and colleagues whose lives they touched so deeply. They had two children, Denise Nelson Akers and Sydney Steven Nelson, both of whom have carried on the tradition of faithfulness, service and compassion to others.

Syd then attended LSU Law School where he excelled graduating at the top of his class, being named to the prestigious Order of the Coif, Associate Editor of the *LSU Law Review* and President of the Junior Class. Following graduation he was admitted to the Louisiana Bar in 1963 having served a one-year federal clerkship with the Honorable United States District Judge, Benjamin Dawkins, Jr. before joining Robert G. Pugh to form the extremely successful firm of Pugh and Nelson. I had the honor of being hired as an associate by Pugh and Nelson in 1976 and the great honor of joining with Syd to form Nelson &





Hammons in 1977. We practiced law together for almost 30 years during which time I was privileged to observe a gentleman who exhibited the principles inherent in the practice of law. His tireless efforts on behalf of his clients to seek and persuasively and effectively present the truth, to uphold the professional and ethical standards that all lawyers should seek, and the compassion that he showed to both clients and others along with the professional manner in which he always addressed attorneys, judges, parties and witnesses was a testament to his character which was exemplified during the 12 years that he served the people of Louisiana in the United States Senate and was routinely acknowledged to be "the Conscience of the Senate."

Syd was a statesman, not a politician. He was principled and diligent in fulfilling the duties of his office, and his effectiveness as a leader in the Louisiana legislature was demonstrated by the fact that he served as Floor Leader for three very different governors: Edwin Edwards, Dave Treen and Buddy Roemer. Syd's faith was exemplified by his spiritual strength and his involvement and commitment to the values of First United Methodist Church first in Shreveport and later in Baton Rouge. He served on the Board at First United Methodist Church in Shreveport and then in Baton Rouge, was Board Chairman of the Volunteers of America for North Louisiana, Vice Chairman of the LSU Health Sciences Foundation, President of the Shreveport Bar Association, and Chairman of the Caddo-Bossier Legal Aid Board. He was named Mr. Shreveport in 2005 as a result of his extraordinary community service.

Syd's professional courage is exemplified by his ethical values which guided him in not only his public persona but also in the smallest details of his personal life. Syd was the most complete lawyer that I have ever met, and during our 45-year friendship, we never had a disagreement nor a cross word. Proverbs 18:24 proclaims, "There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." Syd Nelson forever changed and blessed my life, and his integrity, conscientiousness, and unfailing commitment to both truth and compassion made the world around him a much better place.

Respectfully submitted,

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