

MEMORIAL TO
THOMAS HENRY MCGREGOR

FILED

SEP 19 1966

W. R. Jones
Deputy Clerk

Thomas Henry McGregor was a Christian gentleman, a lawyer, judge, educator, newspaper publisher and businessman. He was born in Minden, Louisiana in August, 1874, and died in Shreveport on November 5, 1965. Although he lived to the ripe age of 91, his life was not merely long, but was active, varied and full and he retained his mental agility and sharp sense of humor until the very last moments of his life.

Born the eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. James E. McGregor of Minden, he was of Scotch-Irish and French descent. His grandfather was Scotch-Irish and his grandmother was French. With such an ancestry it can be well understood that he was a man of great energy and high principle. He was characterized by a fellow attorney as being a contentious man but always contending for the right principles and for justice.

In a limited sense it can be said that Thomas Henry McGregor was a self-made man. As a young boy he was considered to be "sickly" in a physical sense but was always considered to be "smart" mentally. As he grew older his ancestry stood him well and the "sickly" boy lived well beyond the allotted three score and ten years. His father was a farmer, and therefore a man of limited means. Young Thomas McGregor was determined to obtain an education for himself and with characteristic stubbornness of purpose he did just that. Since there was no state operated high school at the time he grew up, he attended a private academy in Minden while working as a store clerk to pay his tuition. Later he worked and paid his own way through Peabody College where he was graduated.

Soon after graduation from Peabody College he was employe

in the schools of Arcadia, Louisiana, as a teacher. Later he taught school at Rayne, Louisiana, and at Rayville, Louisiana. He attained success as an educator and was advanced to be principal of his school at Rayville. Still later he was elevated to the position of superintendent of the Richland Parish schools. In the meantime, his energies took him into the newspaper publishing field and while still teaching school he was also publisher and editor of a weekly newspaper in Rayville. This weekly newspaper, known as the Richland Democrat, was published by him for several years and was a great influence in the community and parish.

It was while at Rayville that he met and married Miss Georgiana Duffie Willis, the daughter of Judge J. W. Willis of Richland Parish. A great interest in law led him to study under the tutelage of his father-in-law, Judge Willis. He applied himself to this task in such a thorough manner that he was admitted to the practice of law following the required period of study. For some time after his admission to the Bar he continued to teach but at the same time practiced law and continued to publish the weekly newspaper, all at the same time. But eventually the law, being the jealous mistress that it is, demanded his full attention and full time in its practice. The three children of the marriage, two sons and a daughter, were born at Rayville from 1903 to 1909. The daughter died in infancy but the two sons survive. That Judge McGregor was devoted to the law is evidenced by the fact that both sons are attorneys.

In about 1916 Judge McGregor moved his family to Shreveport where he continued the practice of law. However, his other activities during this period are more noteworthy than his practice of law. Following World War I, he helped to organize and was the first president of the Louisiana Motor Company, which manufactured

the Bour Davis automobile in a factory located in the old J. B. Beaird Company building in Shreveport. The Bour Davis automobile had been manufactured in Detroit, Michigan, but shortly after World War I it was in financial difficulties and Judge McGregor went to Detroit and negotiated for the purchase of the entire stock and company. The manufacturing operation was moved to Shreveport where it continued its operation for several years. The motor and other parts for the automobile were contracted for. A Continental motor was used in the construction of the six-cylinder touring car, the model of that day and time. The automobile was in the class of the Hudson and Studebaker of that period, but was said to be a superior machine in its performance.

Following this venture, Judge McGregor took a position with the U. S. Government as an attorney and was moved to Alexandria, Louisiana, where he was in charge of the title work for the Federal Government in proving up the large tract of land in central Louisiana for the establishment of Kisatchie National Forest. It was while he was in Alexandria that he was appointed by the Governor of the State of Louisiana to fill an unexpired term as Judge of the Second Circuit Court of Appeals of the State of Louisiana. He served with competence and thoroughness while on the Court of Appeals but did not run for election to the position at the expiration of the term. He was later sent by the Federal Government to Little Rock, Arkansas, where he was in charge of title work for other government projects. It was while he was in Little Rock that he reached retirement age and was retired by the U. S. Government. However, he remained active throughout the remainder of his life and in later years was active in genealogical work here.

As a young boy he received religious training from a devout Christian mother and this training had a great influence upon him for the remainder of his life, although his mother died when he was

a young boy. He was a deeply religious man throughout his life and maintained strong convictions. A member of the Baptist Church, he served as a member of the Board of Deacons of the First Baptist Church of Shreveport for many years. He worked as a member of the Committee for the Revision of the Charter and Constitution of the First Baptist Church and his influence was felt throughout the Baptist denomination for many years. He received the highest honor that can be bestowed upon a layman in the Baptist Church of the state when he was elected President of the Louisiana Baptist Convention.

The death of Judge McGregor evoked an editorial which appeared in the Shreveport Journal shortly after his death. The Shreveport newspaper said in part: "Until his death Friday at the age of 91, Thomas H. McGregor, Sr. maintained a strong interest in community, state, national and world affairs. Despite his advanced years he continued to do research in genealogy which had long been a favorite avocation...Mr. McGregor filled his years with honorable service to his community, state and country..."

The Board of Deacons of the First Baptist Church of Shreveport in a resolution to his family following his death said in part: "We will not soon forget his wise counsel and his high conception of duty to God and man. The zeal with which he contended for the faith and the love that he exhibited for the basic doctrines of our denomination continually inspire us."

His wife preceded him in death in 1944 but he is survived by two sons, Thomas Henry McGregor, Jr. of 9805 Sagamore, Kansas City, Kansas, and Malcolm Parker McGregor of 2025 North Quincy, Arlington, Virginia; one brother, E. M. McGregor of Shreveport and one sister, Mrs. Carol Eames of LaMarque, Texas. To these sur-

vivors we extend our sympathy and condolence and share with them
the pride in the life and achievements of this man of justice,
law and discipline.

Respectfully submitted,

Algie D. Brown

Algie D. Brown

Clare C. Clark

Clare C. Clark

H. W. Ayres

Judge H. W. Ayres