

MYLES P.O'CONNOR

Myles P.O'Connor was born in Williamson County, Tennessee, on May 7, 1874, and died in Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee, on October 25, 1948. He was the son of the late Henrietta Blackman and J.J.O'Connor.

Mr. O'Connor received his preparatory education in Williamson County and attended Vanderbilt University where he graduated with a BA degree in 1897, received his MA degree in 1899, and his LLB degree in 1902 from the School of Law.

Between his graduation in 1897 and receiving his MA degree in 1899 he taught for a year at Homer, La. and also taught a year at Georgia-Tech prior to receiving his law degree.

He was regarded as an outstanding student while in Vanderbilt University and won the Founders Medal upon his graduation from the Law School, which medal is awarded to the student with the highest scholastic average through the entire course of study in the Law School. His was an unusual combination of scholastic and extra-curricular activities, which is evidenced by the fact that he was a member and quarter-back of the Vanderbilt Football team of which he was Captain for one year. The outstanding indication of his popularity with the student body is attested by the fact that he was elected Bachelor of Ugliness, which is awarded by election of the student body to the most popular senior student in the University. He was a member of the Kappa Sigma fraternity.

Following his graduation from the Law School Mr.O'Connor practiced law in Nashville continuously from 1902 until his retirement several years before his death. In the early years of his practice he was associated with the law firm of Barthell & Keeble,

composed of Edward E. Barthell and John Bell Keeble Sr. On January 1, 1912 Mr. Barthell and Mr. O'Connor formed a partnership with R. B. C. Howell under the name of Barthell, Howell and O'Connor. This partnership lasted for five years during which time an office was maintained in Chicago as well as in Nashville. This firm represented large timber interests on the Pacific Coast and in the Gulf States and during this time Mr. O'Connor spent the most of his time in passing on land titles for large bond issues. He became one of the best known land title lawyers in the United States. After the dissolution of the firm of Barthell, Howell and O'Connor, Mr. O'Connor was associated with R. B. C. Howell in the practice of law until 1928, at which time Mr. Howell was appointed Chancellor of Part 1 of the Chancery Court at Nashville. Mr. O'Connor continued in general practice of law at Nashville until his retirement having as associates from time to time Alfred T. Adams, Reber Bouit and James C. Dale Jr.

In addition to becoming widely and favorably known as an expert on land titles, Mr. O'Connor gained a wide reputation as an authority on taxation and was probably one of the first members of the Nashville Bar to engage in this specialty. After 1928 he became Special Counsel for the Department of Finance and Taxation of the State of Tennessee, and participated in the drafting of the Hall Income Tax Act which was passed by the Legislature in 1929. At that time many legal authorities had expressed grave doubt about the constitutionality of the Act. Mr. O'Connor acted as Special Counsel for the State in the case of Shields V. Williams, 159 Tenn. 349, in which case the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of this Act. Also, he served as Special Counsel for the State in test cases which were filed,

arising out of the gasoline and fuel inspection fee statutes and was uniformly successful in the outcome of these cases.

Mr. O'Connor taught in the Vanderbilt Law School on three separate occasions, being on the Law School Faculty in 1902-1903, 1918-1921, and 1931-1938, and always maintained an active interest in the affairs of Vanderbilt University.

He also maintained his interest in athletics and for many years was a member of the Vanderbilt University Athletic Association and served as its President.

He was one of the founders of the Nashville Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution and participated in its meetings and activities. He was also at one time a member of the Kiwanis Club and of the old Hermitage Club.

In 1904 he married Miss Aletha Collins of Atlanta, Georgia who survives him. He is also survived by two daughters, Mrs Tom Stewart and Mrs Ernest K. Hardison Jr., both of Nashville, and by a sister, Mrs A. B. Finke, of Elizabethton, La. He is also survived by four grand-children and it is in connection with these grand-children that a little known but deeply embedded part of his personality is most warmly evidenced. These grand-children, from the time they were able to speak, always referred to their grandfather as "Mikey", and continuously sought his company.

Mr. O'Connor was a quiet man and was probably one of the most thorough legal students who ever practiced before the Courts of this County. His preparation of pleadings and briefs left nothing to be desired. Wherever legal draftmanship was called for, either before the Courts or in office practice including the drafting of complicated contracts, mortgages, trust deeds securing bond issues and other types of legal instruments, he was

a perfectionist.

It has been pointed out that in his school days he was an outstanding student, an outstanding athlete, and a popular student. Likewise, in his career, it can be accurately stated that he continued to be an outstanding student, maintained an interest in athletics, and was counted an esteemed and popular member of the Bar Association by his brother lawyers. He has served as a director and secretary of the Nashville Bar Association.

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Nashville  
Bar Association in regular meeting assembled:

(1) That in the death of Myles P. O'Connor this Association has lost a member of whose ability was outstanding:

(2) That during his life-time he contributed generously of his time and talents to those whom he loved and among whom he lived. The city and state has lost a citizen who accomplished much during his career and who won the esteem and affection of those who knew him.

(3) That a copy of these resolutions be furnished the members of his family, with whom we deeply sympathize, and that a copy be lodged among the permanent records of this Association.

Signed; Alfred T. Adams,  
Chairman

Reber Boulton

W. P. Cooper

This 18th. day of February, 1949.