

WILLIAM H. SWIGGART
1888-1966

A TRIBUTE

In the passing of Judge William H. Swiggart, the Nashville Bar Association lost one of its senior members and one of its most distinguished members.

William Harris Swiggart, Jr. was born in Union City, Tennessee, on October 12, 1888. In his young manhood he was called "Will H." by his many friends, and in later years he was known affectionately to them as "Judge Swiggart." That this title was most appropriate is attested to by the fact that he was the son of a judge, that he himself was a judge of the Supreme Court of Tennessee, and that at the time of his death he was the father of a judge.

Following graduation from Vanderbilt University in 1910 with a degree of Bachelor of Arts, he entered the Cumberland Law School, from which, in 1911, he secured his law degree. Thereafter, he went to the University of Michigan for additional study in law. Upon his return to Union City, he engaged in the private practice of law there with his father. In 1914, Judge Swiggart came to Nashville as one of the two assistants to the Attorney General, Frank Thompson. In that year he married Miss Katherine Mayes of Union City, and they lived to celebrate their golden wedding anniversary. With one brief departure, Nashville was to remain his residence until his death.

Judge Swiggart's professional career divides itself into two phases, the first beginning with his service as Assistant Attorney General and culminating in his selection as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Tennessee, followed by membership on that Court for nearly nine years. After being chosen in 1926 as the nominee of the Democratic Party for Justice of the Supreme Court, he was elected without opposition to an eight year term. In 1934 he was re-elected to another eight year term, again without opposition. In early 1935 Judge Swiggart resigned from the Court to become General Counsel of The Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis Railway.

This began another phase of his professional life. After long service with the N.C. & St. L. Railway, Judge Swiggart left in 1955 to become chief law officer of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad with headquarters at Wilmington, North Carolina, but he was not destined to remain there long. The N.C. & St.L. Railway had lost its Presi-

dent by resignation and the merger with Louisville and Nashville Railroad had been proposed and was pending but not accomplished. Judge Swiggart was induced to return to the N.C. & St. L. Railway as its chief executive officer. Following the railroad merger, he became Vice President of Louisville and Nashville Railroad, which post he held until his retirement in 1958, after which he engaged in the private practice of law in Nashville. Among other clients in important matters was the Third National Bank, for which he had long served as a director.

No tribute to Judge Swiggart would be complete without mention of his participation in church activities and community affairs. One notable achievement in this field was service to The Methodist Church when the Northern and Southern churches were united, and he became Chairman of the Board of Publication of the merged church. Another great service was as a member of the Board of Trust of Vanderbilt University from 1934 until 1961, when he became a life trustee.

While his life and career were distinguished, we shall remember him best and esteem him most as a fellow member of this Bar Association. Always courteous and friendly with other lawyers regardless of which side of the question they represented, he was a formidable antagonist because of the strength of his intellect and the depth of his knowledge of the law.

Friendly, reliable and witty, Judge Swiggart was a favorite with all of us. We can say of our deceased friend, in the words of William Shakespeare -

"His life was gentle, and the elements
So mixed in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, 'This was a man!'"

BE IT RESOLVED, That the members of the Nashville Bar Association express their sorrow at the death of Judge Swiggart and their sympathy to his loved ones; and that a copy of this Resolution be spread upon the minutes and another copy be furnished to Mrs. Swiggart.

Alfred T. Adams
Chancellor

Charles L. Cornelius, Sr.

George F. McCanless

Edwin F. Hunt
Chairman