

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

OSTA M. UNDERWOOD

1914 - 2002

Osta Underwood was born in 1914 in Knoxville, Tennessee, daughter of Sidney and Edith Underwood. Her father was in heavy construction. Her grandfather was a physician. She attended Central High School in Knoxville. After high school she attended Nashville Business College. To help get through school she worked for the Fire Mortgage Division of Metropolitan Life. After graduation her mother urged her to attend law school. Since this was during the depression, her family's savings had been wiped out by the bank closings. Therefore, she attended the YMCA Night Law School, while continuing to work at Metropolitan Life. She graduated in 1936.

Economic circumstances at the time of graduation, as well as the Second World War, prevented her, as well as many young attorneys, from hanging out a shingle, so she kept working at Metropolitan Life. She opened law offices in Peoria, Illinois, South

Carolina and Freemont, Nebraska with increasing responsibility.

According to Osta, no one could admit that she was "running the office", but her efforts helped farmers whose farms were mortgaged to grow crops to feed the country and the army during the war effort.

After the war she returned to Nashville and worked with Ed Dunn at Metropolitan Life where she worked until she was 75. In 1955 she became a certified life underwriter (CLU) . She received the Insurance Executive of the Year Award from the Nashville Association of Insurance Women. She retired at that time only to open her own office with Kay Culbertson until she finally retired for good at age 83.

Osta Underwood's primary contributions were her service on various boards and commissions and her political work with the Business and Professional Women's Club. She was appointed by President Johnson to the Committee for Employment of the Handicapped. President Nixon and Ford named her to the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare's Advisory Committee on the Rights and Responsibilities. Governor Frank Clement appointed her to the

Committee for employment of the Handicapped. Governor Dunn appointed her to the Commission for the Status of Women. In Nashville, Mayor Fulton appointed her chairwoman of the Employee Benefit Board. Mayor Briley appointed her to the Code Administration's Board of Appeals.

Osta Underwood was a diligent and determined community servant and a visionary advocate for social reform. She was an active member of the Equal Rights Amendment Task Force and served as President of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs. She was a founding member of the Lawyer's Association for Women and a member of the District Republican Women's Club and the Women's Political Caucus.

Her proudest moment was in 1951 when the legislature passed a statute allowing women to serve on juries, after a 24 year struggle. The primary reason in opposition to the law was that " the only ones who will serve on juries will be the hangers- on". She led a coalition of all the Business and Professional Women chapters across Tennessee. She enlisted the support of Jean Norman , legal assistant of Judge Byrd Douglas, Judge for 30 years in the Second Circuit Court, Cecil Branstetter, Sanders Anglea, the AAUW, Pilot

International Council of Jewish Women, and the Women's Section of the Tennessee Bar Association. The legislation passed at the last minute, even after the legislature had technically shut down. They were only disappointed, that a woman could opt out if she was a "very tender-hearted woman." She said at the time "It is further evidence that continuing effort of an intelligent nature, on a club to club and member-to member basis results in a direct contact between voter and representative that bears fruit eventually."

She used her same political skills to pass the Equal Rights Amendment, which did pass initially in Tennessee. A longtime friend, Sarah O'Kelley, said "She's one of the most knowledgeable people I've known in many aspects. Politically, certainly in women studies, she was a good lawyer and she was very active in her church."

She was recently honored for her work as one of the first successful women lawyers by the Tennessee Lawyer's Association for Women at their banquet last year, honoring "Pioneer Women in the Law."

Ms. Underwood was an active and devout Christian, a lifelong member of the Belmont Heights Baptist Church, serving as Sunday

School teacher and numerous committees. Always answering the Lord's call, she served as President of the Executive Board of the Tennessee Baptist Convention and a member of the Board of Trustees of Baptist Hospital.

Always devoted to her family, she will be missed by her sister-in-law, Evelyn Underwood, her nieces Sydney Rogers and Paula Winters, as well as her grand-nieces and nephew, Alyson B. Arnold, Phillip Bennett, Ryan Winters, Derek Winters and Savannah Bennett.

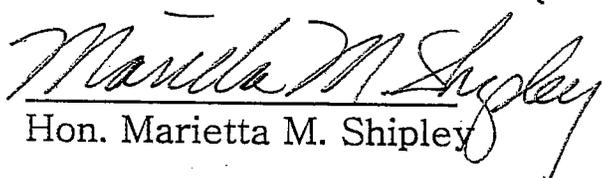
She leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life and diligence and dedication in all her chosen endeavors.

This the ____ day of November, 2002.

Chancellor

Approved for Entry:

Osta M. Underwood Memorial Resolution Committee


 Hon. Marietta M. Shipley


 Margaret L. Behm