

RICHARD MERRILL ATKINSON:

WHEREAS, RICHARD MERRILL ATKINSON died on April 27, 1947, a n d

WHEREAS, he had been a member of the Nashville Bar for thirty-one years, having been admitted to the Bar in 1916.

He was the son of James P. Atkinson and India McIntosh Atkinson, His father had a long and successful career at the Nashville Bar, and his mother was a noted author and poet, and was one of the founders of the Tennessee Authors and Poets League. He had three brothers and one sister, but all of them predeceased him.

WHEREAS, in spite of the short span of his life, Richard Merrill Atkinson had a distinguished career, both in the fields of law and of politics. He graduated from Vanderbilt in 1915, and from Cumberland University Law Department in 1916, but instead of engaging in his profession, he volunteered his services to his country in World War I, and after a short stay in the Naval Hospital Corps, transferred to the Marines and was in the famous Second Division and went into Germany with the Army of Occupation. On his discharge, he returned to Nashville and entered into the active practice of his profession with his father. He soon manifested an interest in politics and was one of the Davidson County managers in the successful campaign of the late Senator Tyson.

In 1925 he received the Democratic nomination for Attorney General of the Tenth Judicial District, which comprised Davidson County, and in 1926 he was elected to that office where he served with distinction and ability for eight years. He retired from that office, without seeking re-election, at the end of his term. His administration was distinguished by his vigorous prosecution of the guilty, and his zealous protection of the innocent.

In 1936, in a hard fought three-cornered race, he was nominated and subsequently elected, to Congress from this, the Hermitage District. Due to his determined stand on certain bitterly fought issues before Congress, he was defeated for renomination. With the exception of one later attempt for a public office, he devoted himself exclusively to his law practice, and was one of the leaders of the Nashville Bar at the time of his death.

Dick, as he was popularly known, was distinguished in law and in politics, by the firmness of his convictions. He gave the full measure of his ability to the causes of his clients, and on public questions and issues there was never any doubt as to his stand; and, what was more, there was never any doubt in his own mind as to the rightness and justness of his position. As a lawyer he reached the heights as a cross-examiner and had the reputation of being one of the most vigorous and successful lawyers in this art.

In spite of his interest in law and politics, he did not neglect his church, and for many years as a young man he gave his time and talents to the Humphrey Street Methodist Church where he had a troop of Boy Scouts, but maintained his membership in the West End Methodist Church. In the later years of his life he was a member of McKendree Methodist Church where he was on the Board of Stewards, was active in the Sunday School and other Church work.

In 1929 he married Miss Beatrice Cockrill, who survived him.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Nashville Bar and Library Association that these Resolutions be adopted, and that they be enrolled upon the Minutes of the Association as a perpetual memorial to Richard Merrill Atkinson.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of these resolutions be sent to his widow, Mrs. Beatrice C. Atkinson.

Respectfully,

C. Vernon Hines,
Beverly Briley,
J. L. Reynolds.
