

**MEMORIAL RESOLUTION
FOR
THOMAS AQUINAS HIGGINS**

Thomas Aquinas Higgins, a distinguished member of the Bench and Bar, died on September 11, 2018, at the age of 86. A devoted husband, a proud father of his three children, a patriot with a strong commitment to the values of this country and the rule of law, Tom Higgins was a learned and honest jurist who will be remembered as a giant of the Bar and a fine judge.

Tom was a member of the Vanderbilt University Law School's famous class of 1957. He and Jim Neal, George Barrett, Tom Shriver, John Hollins, Sr., and John Jay Hooker hit the Nashville legal scene on the same day. Their impact on the city's legal and political history may never be fully understood or measured.

After serving in the United States Army JAG Corps, Tom Higgins went into a law practice with prominent Nashville attorney Bill Willis but ended up as a partner at the firm of Cornelius, Collins, Higgins and White, where he became one of Nashville's premier civil trial lawyers. He represented doctors and corporations with equal proficiency. Local attorneys would often ask Tom to try their lawsuits for them when settlement negotiations broke down.

As President of the Nashville Bar Association in 1972, Tom was asked to go see a local judge who was viewed as under-performing. He was one of only a few lawyers at the Nashville Bar who could have pulled that off without creating an incident. His commitment to the majesty of the law and the "do right rule" gave Higgins the moral authority to do things that other lawyers simply could not do.

In 1984 President Ronald Reagan nominated Tom to the United States District Court bench in Nashville. As a trial judge the wit and wisdom of Tom Higgins became more widely known and Mark Wildasin, along with some of his fellow clerks, compiled a book of "Higgins-isms". They included such notable comments as, "You must think I'm a certified puddin' head". In suggesting to an attorney for a plaintiff engaged in settlement negotiations that he may be aiming a little too high, Higgins was heard to say, "It's a long walk back across Broadway with no money in your pockets." But perhaps the most sage advice of all was his statement that, "In the practice of law, the first 50 years are the hardest."

Higgins was said to have practiced law in the “grand manner”. This meant, in part, that one should conduct oneself with opposing counsel in an absolutely honorable and above-board fashion. But the grand manner as Higgins understood it did not include e-mails but instead parchment paper and quill pen. While he was never a fan of computers and other technological devices, Judge Higgins was dragged into the 21st century by the e-filing mandate of the federal courts.

Tom Higgins believed in doing pro bono work and making contributions to his community. Much of his charitable activities were accomplished through ministries of the Roman Catholic Church of which he was a devout member.

In the halls of the courts where trial lawyers practice their craft and in the rooms smelling of tobacco and whiskey, where the stories are told and the exploits of the great lawyers are passed along, the name of Tom Higgins will often be mentioned by those who were lucky enough to practice with him, be mentored by him, appear before him, or know him as a friend. These stories need no embellishment. The example of this lawyer’s lawyer will continue to provide guidance to the Nashville legal community for years to come.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the members of the Nashville Bar Association solemnly express our profound appreciation for the life and work of Thomas Aquinas Higgins. We recognize and honor his contribution to his family, his friends, his state and his nation. And we mourn his passing.


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Memorial Resolution be placed in the permanent records of the Nashville Bar Association and entered in the “In Memoriam” Minute Book of the Chancery Court of Davidson County, and that copies be furnished to the members of Tom Higgins’ family.

This 23rd day of May, 2019.

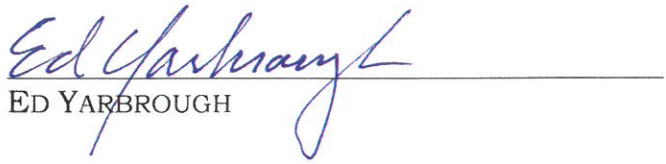
Respectfully submitted,



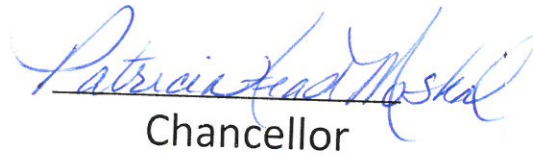
TOM CARLTON



MARK WILDASIN



ED YARBROUGH



Chancellor