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RESOLUTION IN MEMORY OF

JAMES CONNELLY EDWARDS

JAMES CONNELLY EDWARDS was born in Russellville, Kentucky, on May 31, 1887. Mr. Edwards' early life did much to shape the values which he held dear all his life, and which governed his conduct in all of the areas of his professional and personal life in the years to come. His uncle, George Edwards, who was president of the bank in Russellville, taught him the difference between "active" and "passive" friendship. Mr. Edwards could think of no more serious insult than to be thought of as a passive friend. His uncle also taught him that anything worth doing was worth doing

right, and the exceedingly high goals of achievement which were instilled in him accounted for the excellence of the legal work which he produced.

Connelly Edwards was the beneficiary of one of the finest educations that could be obtained in this country. He attended Taft Preparatory School in Water-town, Connecticut, in 1904, and graduated from the old Branham & Hughes School in Spring Hill, Tennessee, in 1905. That fall he entered Yale University and was an active participant in the undergraduate life there, having been a member of Delta Kappa Epsilon Fraternity. He received his A.B. degree from Yale in 1909, and then entered the Harvard Law School and received his Bachelor of Law degree in 1912.

Mr. Edwards soon took up his professional career in Nashville, Tennessee, and was associated throughout his professional career with many distinguished lawyers of this community, some of them being: Garland S. Moore, John Bell Keeble, Jr., Sidney Keeble, Albert W. Stockell, William Finney, and others.

In 1918, having married Mary Laura Seay of Gallatin, he soon began a professional relationship with her father, the late Judge Ed T. Seay, as a member of the firm of Seay, Stockell & Edwards. The influence upon Mr. Edwards of Judge Seay was immense as both men admired the sharp quality of the other's mind. Mr. Edwards traveled widely in the Middle Tennessee area, representing many insurance companies, and he was very effective before the rural triers of fact as well as with the more urbane juror.

One of the particularly bright spots in Mr. Edwards' professional life was the period of time in which he served as an Assistant District Attorney General for Davidson County under Attorney General G. B. Kirkpatrick. He truly enjoyed the combat of the courtroom and sharpened his legal skills to a fine head. For years thereafter he always enjoyed the name of "General". He was a skilled pleader who tolerated nothing but correctness in his pleadings and legal documents.

No one case could better epitomize the perfection of Mr. Edwards' legal capabilities than the case of New York Life Insurance Company vs. Nashville Trust Company, et al, also known as "the Buntin case". Mr. Edwards worked for hours upon hours on this case to insure that his client had the benefit of every known decision in the United States that could have any bearing on this involved and novel legal situation. In the face of countless good lawyers telling him that he did not have a chance of succeeding, he was successful in convincing the courts of this State that justice would best be done in following his line of reasoning, which necessitated the courts' taking a new and dramatic approach to many well settled propositions of law.

Mr. Edwards was so tremendously concerned with the welfare of his friends that he was fiercely protective of all those to whom he felt allegiance. In the area of friendship, there was no middle ground with Mr. Edwards. If you could be counted in that circle of friends, there was nothing that he would not attempt to perform on your behalf, and your need of any sort was a command to him to help you.

This circle of friends was wide and diverse, but the Kind Words Club which met at the Hermitage Hotel for lunch every day was probably the inner circle. Mr. Edwards truly enjoyed the comradeship of all walks of life, and king or servant could count on Mr. Edwards, so long as the dues of friendship and of loyalty were paid.

His devotion to his wife during the last years of his life was legendary and he always was deeply and lovingly protective of Mary Laura because of her serious

health problems. His grandson, Connelly Edwards Woody, who was named for him, was a source of joy. He was never happier than when his family consisting of Mary Laura, his daughter, Polly Woody, now of St. Louis, his son-in-law, Tom Woody, of whom he was tremendously proud, and his grandson were together with him at his home. He would inform one and all when they were arriving, and the happiness of all his family was tremendously important to him.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Nashville Bar Association remember with affection the late member, James Connelly Edwards, who died on May 13, 1970, and that this resolution of appreciation for his life be spread upon the minutes of the said Association, and copies of this resolution be sent to his wife, Mary Laura, and to his daughter, Polly.

John J. Hollins  
Chairman of the Committee

T. T. McCarley

Lewis D. Pride

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